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BURNS DOWN
THE HOUSE**

How you gonna see me now?

**INK ON YOUR HANDS
(AND FACE)**

Rock ain't dead

BUCKCHERRY

Fire in the head

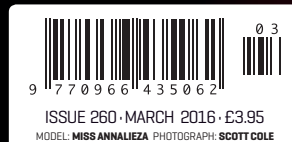
CELTIC TATTOOS

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SKULLS AND CROSSBONES

Thirty years ago, many of the aspects of tattooing we now take for granted, didn't exist. You can probably name them all at your leisure—disposables, water colour styles, hand tattoos as the norm or almost the norm anyway. For some of us (not me of course, I'm a lot younger than I look), thirty years ago is recent memory—or at least recent enough to have a stab at.

What does that make it? If my math is acceptable, that would make it 1986.

But wait a second! If the past is so damn good, why is it no longer here?

Instead, let's press the other button on the remote and look ahead to 2046. Actually, that scares the crap out of me. At the rate of progress in everything right now, let's throw a far more lenient ten years into the arena. I can handle 2026 and so can you.

If you're a lazy slob, maybe you'll still be working the same desk job you are right now—it happens, so let that be a warning to not take your eye off the ball. However, in those ten years, I wonder what will happen when it comes to 'the art'. Will it become more, or less, of a craft? Will it go back underground or push out ever further into the mainstream? Will tech take over more than we ever dreamed? And the biggest question on my lips... will people still be getting Jack Sparrow tattooed?

I could take a good stab that laser removal will be a thing of the past, having been replaced with some serious creams. I also think tech will feature heavily—and I hope it loses badly. The day an artist isn't physically putting ink in your skin is the day the image on your skin ceases to be a tattoo and becomes a 'process' which is not the same thing at all. That would be like leaving a computer to write a song or a book for you. Soulless is what it will be—but I suspect it will become a 'thing' all the same because some plant-based humans will think it's 'cool',

As for the myriad of styles available—where will we be going on that front?

I don't have an answer for that question.



Lukasz Glenicki

THE DAY AN ARTIST ISN'T PHYSICALLY PUTTING INK IN YOUR SKIN IS THE DAY THE IMAGE ON YOUR SKIN CEASES TO BE A TATTOO



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Sometimes it's hard to imagine we can ever go anywhere else—until tomorrow when *that* tattoo ends up in my inbox or I see it at a show. In ten years, there will also be kids who are twelve right now who will slay your ass into the ground. Twelve!

But there will also be artists who were once ass kickers who couldn't keep up. Some will and some won't. That's the way life rolls.

If you're feeling brave enough to project your world forwards thirty years, knock yourself out and see where it gets you. If Johnny Depp features heavily in your predictions and announces he's up for *Pirates of the Caribbean 14: Jack's back from the Dead*, start running for the hills.

We will have finally broken the planet. ▣

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One tattoo show whose reputation precedes it is the small but perfectly formed Ink & Ride tattoo convention held in Hamburg, Germany. We handed out pens and paper to Bernd Muss, Mowgli and Matt Pettis.

22 HOW YOU GONNA SEE ME NOW

We as tattoo lovers might think that we can walk into any tattoo shop, point at the patch of skin furrowed on our foreheads, and get a big, beautiful design inked between our temples. However, we'd be sadly mistaken.

28 ONNIE O'LEARY

Onnie O'Leary's work is some of the hottest stuff you can find in the tattoo world. Her images—influenced by

comic art—are of beautiful, voluptuous women and are an ode to the female body and beauty. It's a real pleasure to introduce her work in Skin Deep.

56 MATYAS HALASZ

The beautiful city of Budapest is home to Matyas Halasz and his colourful fragmented tattoos. Nicky Connor finds out how fate and a love of adrenaline changed his path from landscape architecture to tattooist.

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Wayne Simmons goes Behind the Ink to chat about a certain sci-fi blockbuster changed three artists' lives.

68 BUCKCHERRY

Buckcherry are about as rock 'n' roll as

they come. Since forming in 1995, the band has topped the charts with hits like 'Lit Up' and 'Sorry', shared the stage with everyone from AC/DC to Slipknot and repeatedly proven that, contrary to popular belief, rock is alive and well.

74 MIKE ADAMS

It is ten o'clock in the morning and one writer is already running late for a tattoo appointment with Mike Adams—but all is good in the hood really...

80 SKYCLAD

With more symbolism and mystery attached to it than perhaps any other 'race' of people on earth, being a Celt is often misunderstood in the extreme. We ventured out to see what we could bring to the table by way of explanation...

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

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ISSN 0966-4351

Can't find Skin Deep magazine in your newsagent?

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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd





MYRA BRODSKY TATTOOS

Myra Brodsky is well known on the Berlin tattoo scene as both an artist and illustrator whose work is re-blogged far and wide and who now works at Black Mirror Parlour. By the time you read this, she will also be adding 'author' to her list of credentials with the release of her book 'Myra Brodsky Tattoos'.

The coffee table sized book fully titled: 'Myra Brodsky Tattoos, 2010-2015' features a selection of recent paintings and best-of tattoos produced by Myra in the past five years. It includes some of her most recent tattoos and paintings, created in oil, acrylic and gouache work that captures the imagination of Berlin's creative culture.

You can find Myra online here: myrabrodsky.com and here: [instagram.com/spinsterette](https://www.instagram.com/spinsterette) and if you're really game on, you can contact her here: meibrent@hotmail.com, where you can also order a copy of the book direct.

YAKUZA APOCALYPSE



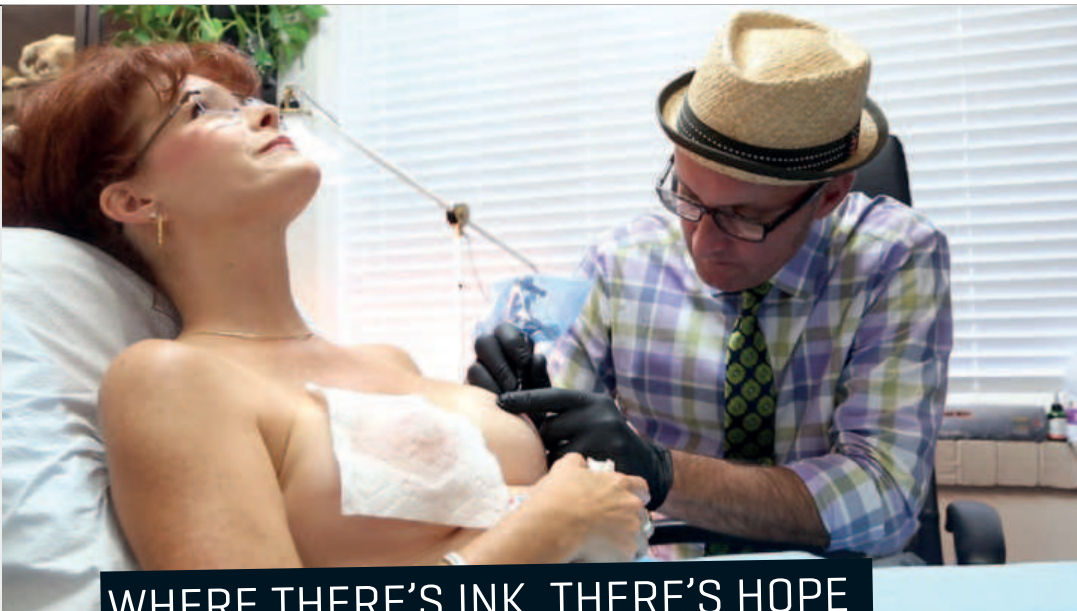
The new movie from Takashi Miike (Ichi the Killer, 13 Assassins) is called Yakuza Apocalypse and it's a peach.

It's an absolutely crazy, martial arts and vampire-fuelled, fun flick that was released on the 6th January. It stars Yayan Ruhain (who you may recognise from his role as Mad Dog in The Raid).

Here's what you can expect: Due to his sensitive skin, Kageyama is ridiculed by his fellow Yakuza clan members for being the only one who cannot be branded with their signature tattoo. When Kamiura, the fearsome Yakuza boss who also happens to be a bloodsucking vampire is brutally killed by a competing clan, he passes on his vampire powers to his loyal lieutenant. Now Kageyama is transformed into a bloodthirsty monster who will stop at nothing to avenge his former boss—and yes, there are tattoos aplenty.

You can catch the trailer here: youtube.com/watch?v=CgQk5i3anzQ (or just search for the damn thing!)





WHERE THERE'S INK, THERE'S HOPE

Out in the US, there's a station called WBAL-TV 11 [snappy!] who, like us, have always been on the ball when it comes to supporting cures for breast cancer. Right now, they have launched a new show called "11 For The Cure"

Among those assisting in helping those with breast cancer is Vinnie Myers, a local tattoo artist (we're in the Baltimore area here) and owner of Little Vinnie's in Finksburg, who is on a mission to help bring closure to survivors of the disease.

Myers said anywhere from six to nine women a day come to his shop which is tucked in a tiny Carroll County strip mall. They are all hoping for the same help in their recovery from breast cancer. The woman of all ages come from all over the region seeking out Myers' expertise.

Kristen Toth was just 24 when breast

breast cancer hit home.

"My sister got breast cancer in 2010," Myers said. "I probably would have gotten out of it but for her and realising there's just such a need." Myers reckons he tattoos an average of 2,000 survivors a year. They come from all over the world to see Myers hoping for closure.

Myers, 53, says surgeons have long overlooked the significance of this final step for women, many of whom view their reconstructed breasts as a reminder of pain and disease. "I'm reminded of it every day, when people tear up or cry

or thank me," Myers said. "It's pretty incredible."

"When you're looking at those breasts, all you see are the scars, and all you're reminded of is cancer, so when you put this finishing touch on there, it dis-

tracts your eye from all those other imperfections because you have something to look at that's very pleasing, and it's an incredibly emotional finishing touch."

You can find out more about this and follow video of the show here: wbaltv.com/health/11-for-the-cure

"AS FAR AS ARTISTIC SATISFACTION IS CONCERNED, THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY," HE SAYS ABOUT HIS CAREER PATH. "THE CHALLENGE COMES IN MAKING SURE YOU'RE DOING A SAFE JOB, A GOOD JOB ON COMPROMISED TISSUE"

cancer invaded her left breast. She had a mastectomy in March 2014. Mary Somers, of Chicago, was diagnosed with the disease at 54.

Both women came to Little Vinnie's to receive a 3-D image of a nipple on their breast following reconstruction after being treated for breast cancer.

"It's not really what I signed up for, but I can't stop now," Myers said.

Myers started tattooing breast cancer survivors in 2001. He figured out how to create a 3-D image of a nipple for women following reconstruction. After years of fine tuning the process,



CONVENTIONS

MILANO TATTOO CONVENTION

05-07 February

Hotel Quark
Via Lampedusa, 11/3
20141 Milano,
Italy
milanotattooconvention.it

LAPLAND TATTOO WEEKEND

12-13 February

Toranda Events
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Finland
laplandtattoo.com

THE TATTOO SHOW VALENCIENNES

27-28 February

Les Arènes
Parc Lavoisier, Rue Michel Chasles
59494 Petite-Forêt
France
thetattooshow-tour.com

MONDIAL DU TATOUAGE

04-06 March

Grande halle de la Villette
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75019 Paris
France
mondialdutatouage.com

TATTOO INK EXPLOSION 7

11-13 March

Kaiser-Friedrich-Halle
Hohenzollernstraße 15
41061 Moenchengladbach
Germany
tattooinkexplosion.com

6TH TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA PORTSMOUTH

25-27 March

Pyramids Centre
Clarence Esplanade
Portsmouth PO5 3ST
tattooextravaganza.co.uk

INK & IRON TATTOO CONVENTION

03 April

The New Bingley Hall
1 Hockley Circus
Birmingham B18 5PP
inkandiron.co.uk

TATTOO ART EXPO CORK

16-17 April

Montenotte Hotel
Middle Glanmire Rd
Cork
Ireland

9TH BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION

30 April-01 May

The Brighton Centre
B M E C P Centre, 10A Fleet St
Brighton, East Sussex BN1 2GR
blog.brightontattoo.com

9TH LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION

07-08 May

Britannia Adelphi Hotel
Ranelagh Place
Liverpool, L3 5UL
liverpooltattooconvention.com

GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

28-29 May

Alexandra Palace
London
greatbritishtattooshow.com



NZ TATTOO & ART FESTIVAL ROUNDUP

Now in its fifth year, more than 8000 visitors attended the NZ Tattoo & Art Festival last November that featured over 250 tattoo artists from around the world. The festival is Australasia's largest tattoo event and continues to attract some of the biggest names in the industry.

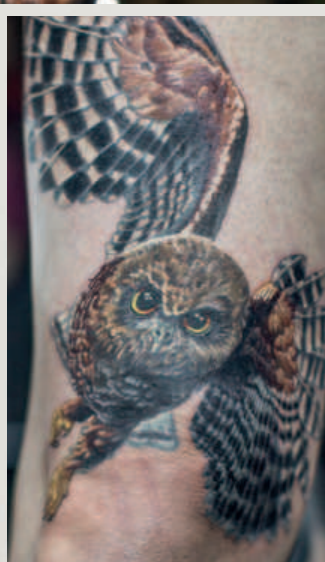
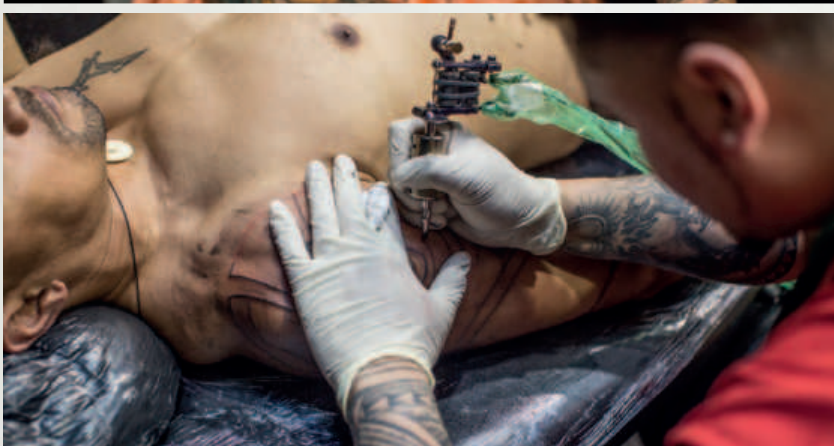
Of note within all of this, is Steve Butcher (Ship Shape Tattoo) who picked up the award for Best Artist at the show along with the award for Best Realistic/Portrait with a colour realism piece of Smokey from the movie "Friday". Steve seems to be making some tremendous waves out in the world at the moment—it was only a couple of months back that he swept up with his award at the Florence show.

Elsewhere at the show, Matt Jordan (owner of Ship Shape) also won Best Chest/Back and if you throw in the bonus balls that Matt also helped raise funds for Taranaki Base Hospital's children's and neo-natal wards by donating

a two-day tattoo valued at \$2,400 for the Joes Garage Charity Raffle, the raffle raised over \$4,000 for the wards—we can probably say with a lot of confidence that Ship Shape is a studio kicking particularly fine ass at the moment.

As a little side note on this, Matt's contribution makes that a total of over \$19,200 that the Festival has raised for the Hospital.

If you're looking for a show to go to next year and want to tie it in with a holiday of some kind, you'd be well advised to make some time to add this one to your list of things to do.



...and the other winners are:

Lucky Supply Best of Show

Dean Sacred – Sacred Tattoos Auckland

Marv Lerner Best Of Day Saturday

Karl Van der Linden – Napier

Mogan Petit Best Of Day Sunday

Emma Kerr – Bohemian Tattoo Arts, Tauranga

Rees Engineering Best Traditional

Matt Lloyd – Slave to the Needle, Seattle

Skinks Tattoo Best Oriental

Nick Nounan – Left Hand Path, Christchurch

Najalu Massage Best Maori/Pacific

Pat Morrow – True Marketing Tattoo Studio, Australia

Bradley Garner Photography Best Colour

Hamish Forsyth – Black Swallow, Hamilton

Cambridge Bodyart Best Black & Grey

Ben Kaye – Skinks Tattoo, Hamilton

Future Floors Best Leg

Josh Ross – Steve Johnson's City of Ink, Christchurch

Rumor Clothing Best Arm

Ben Kaye – Skinks Tattoo, Hamilton

by
Santa Perpetua



“It’s difficult for me to explain my artwork. It comes very naturally as a bunch of emotions and thoughts that I release through drawing and tattooing, building something nice in the end.

“I feel especially attracted to primates. I’m amazed by the way they behave and look so similar to humans—almost like a human mirror—but without the mask that all of us wear to interact in society. I can’t help but use them as a metaphor to show ourselves.

In this tattoo, I tried to reflect rage as one of the primary emotions we have. From my view, rage is not a positive or negative emotion. It is a powerful feeling that all of us experience at some point and, as with the rest we naturally have, like love, pain or sadness, it should be released in some way.

“It seems that these days we are not allowed to show any kind of true emotions in society. We are pushed to behave as polite machines in which everything is exactly measured and under control. We are forced to be less human than ever with terrible consequences: isolation, loneliness, stress and a complete lack of solidarity and honesty.

“So this piece is my way of speaking out about true emotions: pain, sadness, and rage.”

Santa Perpetua

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Black Sails Tattoo

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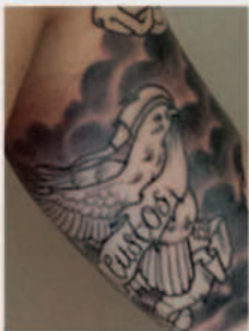
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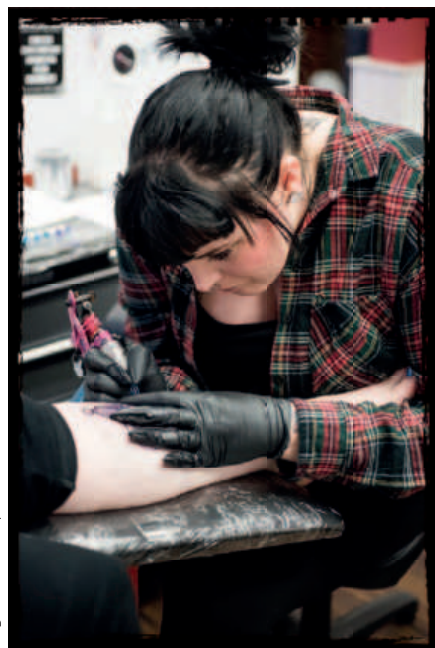
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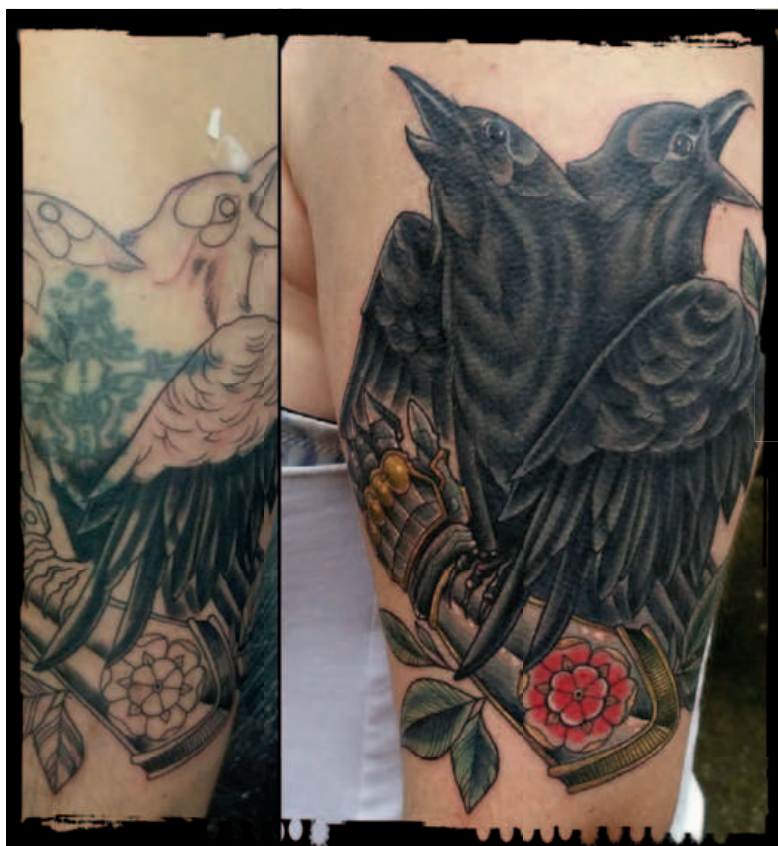
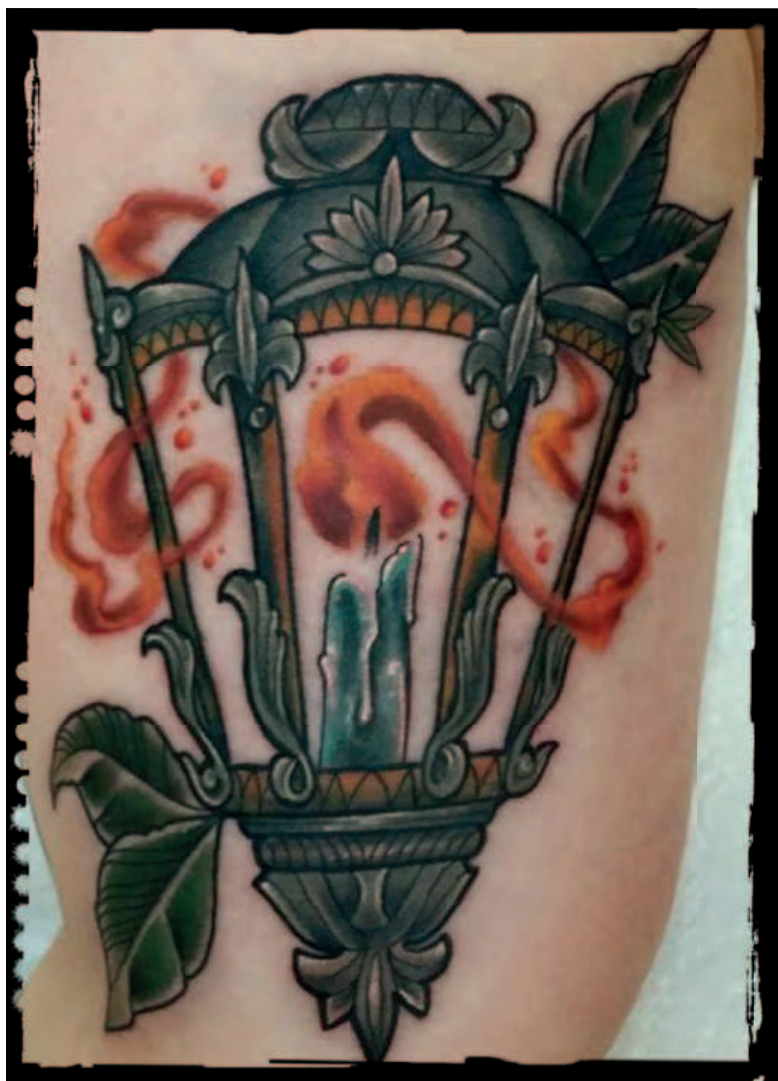
In an occasional new series, we thought it would be interesting to throw a spotlight on a studio we—as writers and observers—collectively respect, and let the visuals do all of the talking for us. Thus, we proudly present...

Nevermore Tattoo Parlour

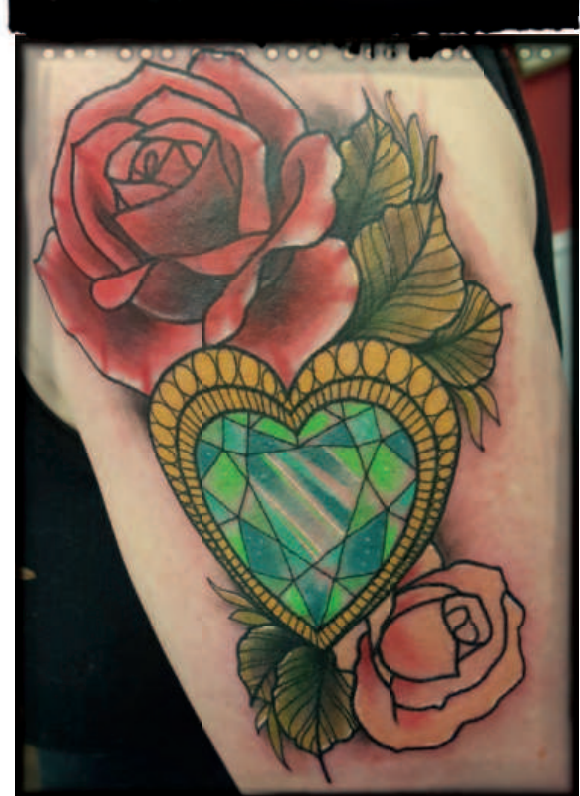
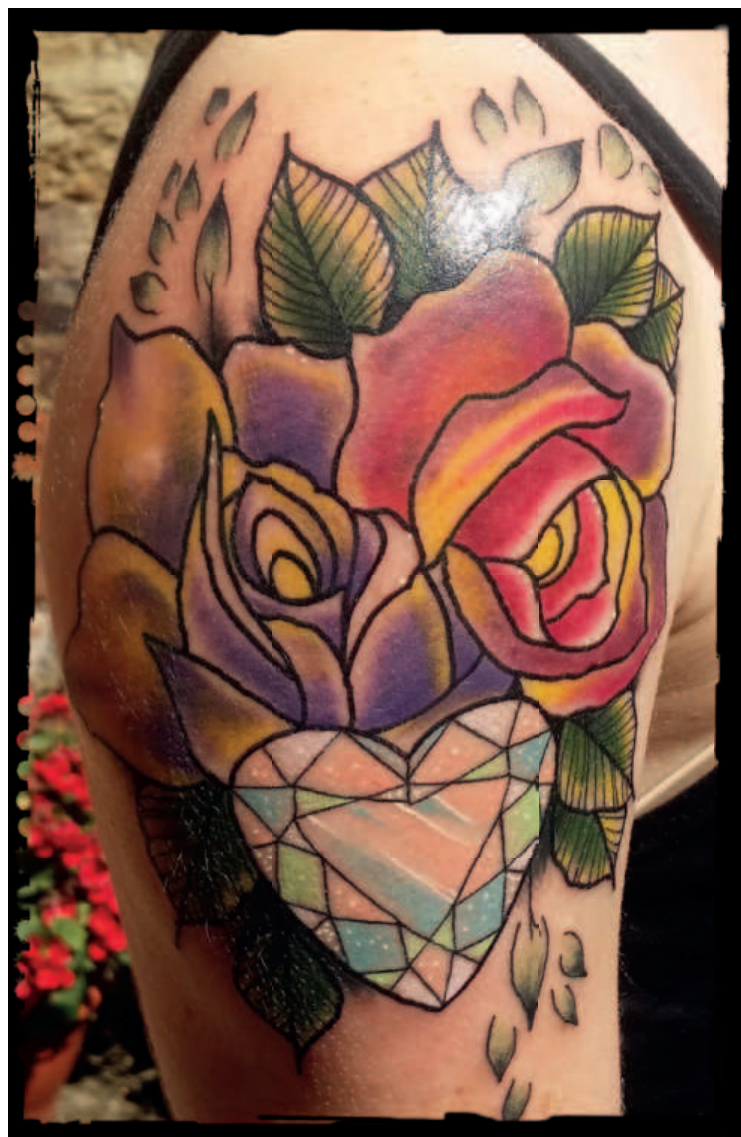
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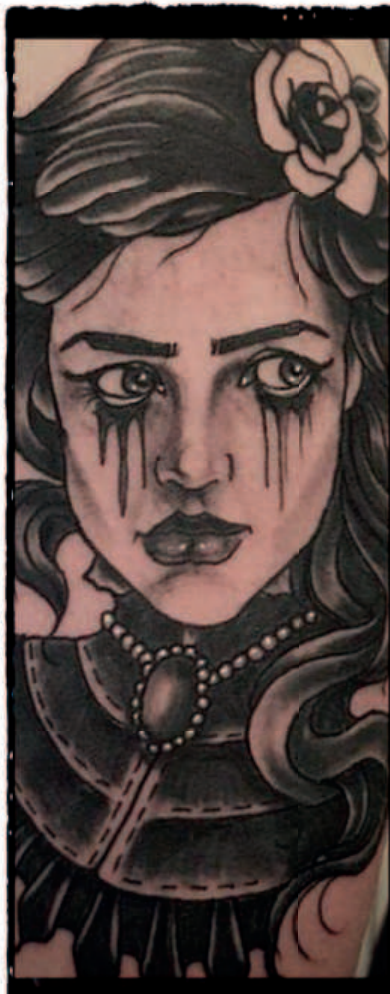


Images: Carla Mundy



All work on this page by Paula Castle





Nevermore Tattoo Parlour

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 Kevin Brodie
 Paula Castle

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INK & RIDE

Words: Nicky Connor • Images: BBW—Clementine McFeeley and Emma Bundonis; Colour—credit on each image



Lennart Ritscher

ONE TATTOO SHOW WHOSE REPUTATION PRECEDES IT IS THE SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED INK & RIDE TATTOO CONVENTION HELD IN HAMBURG, GERMANY. NICKY CONNOR HANDED OUT PENS AND PAPER TO BERND MUSS, MOWGLI AND MATT PETTIS...

Organiser Bernd explains the concept: 'We were on one of those tattoo conventions where you just do not know which city or even country it is. Because they are all the same and seem to be full of stink, stickiness, expensive merch, bad chips and draft but no soul. No magic. No artful expression. No expression at all. And it was there we decided to merge our passions to create a different kind of event. For a different kind of crowd—and that was it. That was the birth of Ink & Ride.'

Fast-forward two shows later and I catch up with tattoo artist Bernd Muss and also a few homegrown friends—tattoo artists Mowgli and Matt Pettis to chat about their time at the 2015 show.

Held annually in September, Ink & Ride first started three years ago. Founder Bernd was inspired by other tattoo shows he had visited but wanted to expand the concept. The theme of the show is based around tattoos but also celebrates skate and BMX culture, bringing all three together in a creative and entertaining mix. The very first show was held in an old train terminal and the shows





© Lennart Ritscher

Ink & Ride is based on a monomania I had since I knew of other conventions

BERND

were originally scheduled to be bi-annual, but the success of the show convinced the team to repeat it the following year. Bernd said of the concept behind the show, “Ink & Ride is based on a monomania I had since I knew of other conventions”

For the last two years the show's home has been in, and in front of, the Museum der Arbeit in Hamburg, Germany. Opened in 1997 the museum is located on the site of a former

Bernd's highlights:

Our Warm-up Party. The art exhibition in an old water tower on the venue. A breathtaking BMX show. And all the great artists involved!



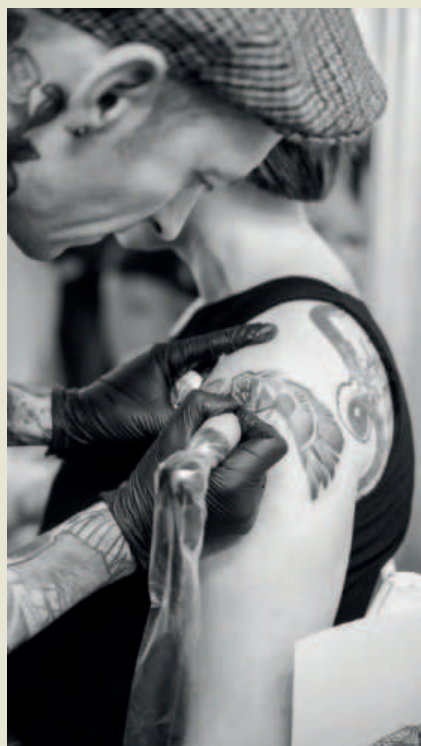
G-Shock Art © by Lennart Ritscher

factory building and the show utilises both the indoor and outdoor space. In addition to Bernd the organisational team include Sebastian Hack, Florian Laudon, Christoph Zingelmann and Karolina Holeska.

This September's convention ran from Friday 11th September to Sunday 13th.

On the Friday night, the show opened at 6pm kicking off with an exhibition in the magnificently beautiful museum—this was one of Bernd's highlights. The museum itself is a great venue; the building consists solely of a spiral walkway, which contrasted perfectly with the custom artwork decorating the walls, as you gracefully climbed your way to the top. The sound track to the weekend was skilfully mixed by a host of resident DJs.

Mowgli's thoughts? “This was a great first night opening which allowed all the artists to come together for a meet and greet over a tippie. While the evening progressed a live collaboration of graffiti was being done as the guests entered as well as a little tattoo being done by Josh Peacock in a hidden



Tattoo of the day winner © by Lennart Ritscher

room within the dead centre of the building.”

Saturday was a big day for both Mowgli and Matt Pettis as this marked the first international convention they had been invited to, but being greeted by Bernd at the front door eased up any tensions the duo had been worried about.

Mowgli: “Ink & Ride screams out art in its purest form, bringing together a perfect combination of Art, Bike and Tattoos. Before entering the convention of tattoo artists, the crowd is greeted with a host of graffiti walls and a bunch of skaters running up half pipes and flipping tricks in all directions. This eases the vibe, and all professions are grateful for each others presence as one goes hand in hand with the other.”

On arriving at the show, the public are encouraged to join in with the graffiti and spectate the board and bike tricks on the ramps, this began the overall inclusive vibe to get everyone involved. Mowgli and Matt were

Ink & Ride screams out art in its purest form, bringing together a perfect combination of art, bike and tattoos

MOWGLI

both impressed by the facilities, the ample size booths allowed each exhibitor to adorn their space with glorious decor which made you think you were at a new studio with each step. This was also upheld with the natural and eclectic fashion sense from both the artists and crowd who seemed to be so comfortable with one another.

Over 2000 visitors were recorded on the Saturday, which was a fantastic turn out. Punters were even turning up half an hour before closing, just to catch a glimpse of the exhibit, which also happened on the second day.

Throughout the convention little things were planned that got everyone involved

Matt's highlights:

“The spiral building was one of my highlights with the high quality and diversity of art.”



BMX Contest © by Lennart Ritscher

We want to get bigger. In the best way of meaning, as the inspiring festival for tattoo, skate and bike culture

BERND

Mowgli's highlights:

"The Ink & Ride is so beautiful and well thought out, I felt at home. Each artist really has a distinctive style and they are so lovely too."

from all ages. From interactive graffiti for the adults to little wooden tattoo machines with pencils for the kids that were so cute! Other attractions included custom jewellery, t-shirt prints, live screen printing and customising your own beer bottle labels. A big consideration for Bernd was the quality of food on offer

and he certainly delivered with a cool selection of organic food and drink, which all would agree was mouthwateringly excellent.

Each day of the show saw a competition for tattoo of the day, with the trophy being a creative broken half of a skateboard on bike gears with the Ink & Ride logo printed on it. Each entry was graded on a few factors including the cleanliness of lines, composition, placement, creativeness and general coolness. In addition, the ceremony also consisted of awards going to Young Artist Tal-



ent. Other attractions included an auction to raise money for the refugee crisis and all the art was donated to the cause too.

I asked Bernd how he felt this year's show was received.

"Pretty good, we gain people and positive feedback every year. There are artist requests from all over the world and we manage to grow in a good way—without getting too commercial."

The show will continue next year and will be at the same location and this will be the fourth annual show. The date will probably be around the 10th September in 2016.

I asked Bernd how he felt the show differed from the UK shows,

"Actually I have only been to 4 UK shows. But I think—besides the concept of Ink & Ride—the audience is different. Tattooing has a longer tradition and a better reception in the UK I guess, so the crowd is quite mixed. And people are older. Or let us say: they are rather young and hip here." ▣

Bernd would like to thank:

"My ex-girlfriend and mother of my daughter for reworking the concept and the whole team who make Ink & Ride possible and add so much soul to it year by year. Now we want to get bigger. And when I say bigger, I mean for Ink & Ride to become the most inspiring festival for tattoo, skate and bike culture."

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Josh Sanchez

HOW YOU GONNA SEE ME NOW?

Words: Amanda Peukert • Images: As credited

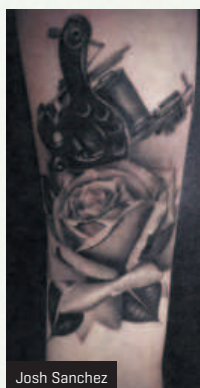
We as tattoo lovers might think that we can walk into any tattoo shop, point at the patch of skin furrowed on our foreheads, and get a big, beautiful design inked between our temples. However, we'd be sadly mistaken...

A great number of artists would hop on the opportunity to rev up their machines and prick into that pretty little brow line, but other artists—and entire shops for that matter—refuse to tamper with areas that could potentially reap regret further on down the road.

Perhaps, when the collector is already covered from earlobe to pinky-toe, it can be assumed that they've willingly reached the point of no return, or maybe that they're just part of the rare but fortunate party whose hands, face, and neck tattoos are revered—or at least tolerated. But, when these significant sections of skin are requested by up-and-coming collectors with few to no tattoos, or those who have ink that has been carefully placed in easily concealable areas, for some artists, it can send whipping red flags flying into the air.

When a client has hurriedly plunged from the infinity-sign puddle straight into the neck-piece pool, the artist may be inclined to rightfully reject the request; tattooers sometimes bear the weight of their customers' impetuous decisions.

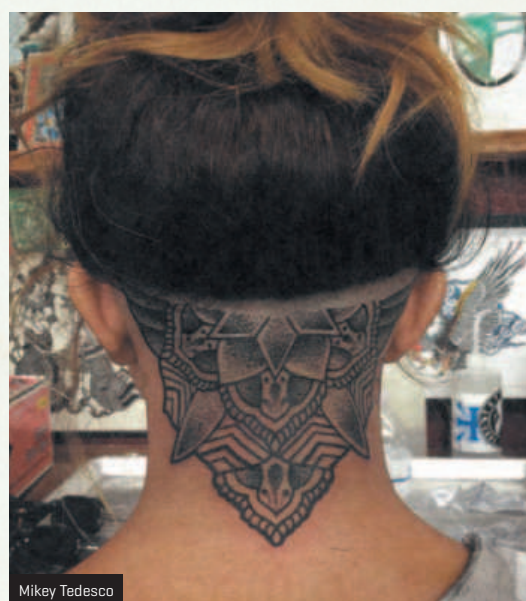
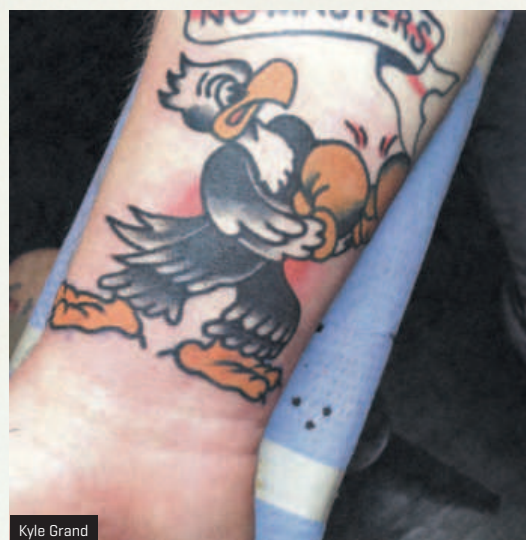
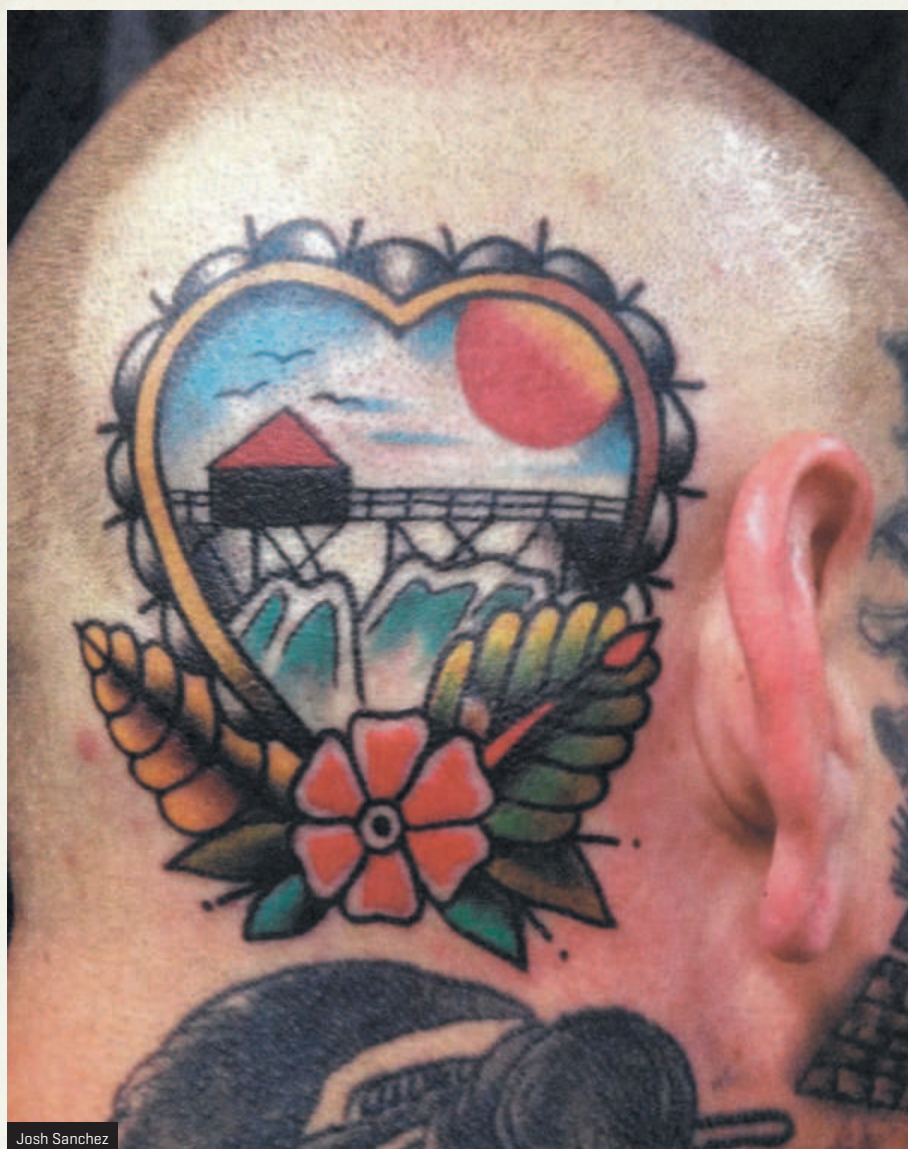
THE EXCITEMENT OF SEEING AN INTRICATELY TATTOOED HAND ON TUMBLR TAKES OVER ALL LOGIC, AND WE'RE HOOKED ON THE IDEA THAT WE NEED ONE TOO



Josh Sanchez

That's not to say that the premise of a tattoo hasn't been well-developed and deeply thought over, but more often than not, the excitement of seeing an intricately tattooed hand on Tumblr takes over all logic, and we're hooked on the idea that we need one too.

Seeing as I'm not an artist myself—though I do own both a hand and neck tattoo—I can't and won't ask you to take my word—or work—for it. What I will do, however, is let you peek into the minds of a couple artists who aren't too keen on inking craniums (or any other body part that might potentially fuck-up someone's future), and tap into the thoughts of two artists who will happily ink you wherever.



JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN MAKE THE LEGAL DECISION TO GET A TATTOO DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF KYLE GRAND

Kyle Grand of Black Sails Tattoo: “[I won’t do it] because I have a conscience. Just because you can make the legal decision to get a tattoo doesn’t mean you should be taken advantage of. Despite what you may think, it’s a lot harder for someone without a trade job to get hired with highly visible tattoos. I feel it’s our job as artists to direct our clients in a way that puts art on their bodies without ruining any opportunities for their future. Your first tattoo as an adult shouldn’t be an AK-47 on your jaw, but if you’ve [already] got sleeves and a chest-rocker, by all means I’d love to tattoo your face.”



Rob Nunez of American Beauty Tattoo: “These inexperienced kids getting tattooed all over their hands and faces have no clue how big the world is

and how judgmental it has become. Yes, tattoos are more acceptable, but only in certain places. I’ve been tattooing for 26 years and I’ve seen a lot of tattoo trends come and go: tribal arm-bands, flaming wristbands, tramp stamps, nautical stars, swallows, suns around the belly button, Celtic bands, infinity signs, dream catchers, etc. After getting these tattoos, they all come to me to get them covered up. This was even before the internet, and now the possibility of bad decisions has increased a thousand fold. Also, face skin is different than any other skin on the body because it has more water and will shift and move as you get older. The tattoo will start to look like a mess and the artist’s name is connected to it—that’s not good for business. So, if [a client] runs out of room everywhere else on their body, then I’ll do it. But, back to the main question: I’d rather not deal with the headache. I’ll just stick to doing a solid tattoo anywhere else but hands and faces; someone else can have that job.”

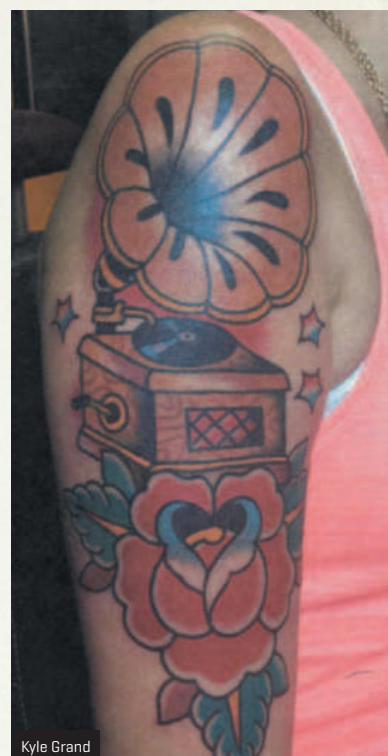
So, we’re not all freakishly fortunate enough to have a career like Rick Genest (See: Zombie Boy); our paychecks aren’t necessarily based on our



Rob Nunez



Kyle Grand



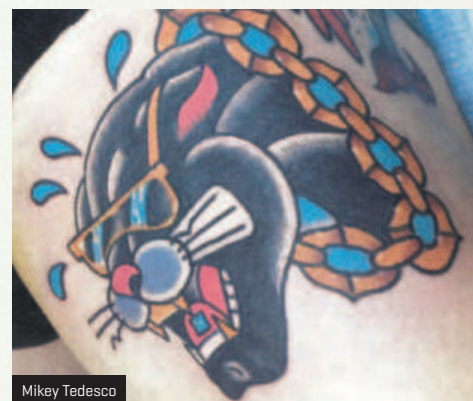
Kyle Grand



Josh Sanchez



Rob Nunez



Mikey Tedesco

ability to rebel so steadfastly that the media can't help but chuck some change our way. And, though the industry is slowly beginning to shed its lead wings and take flight, there are still some tattooed areas that serve as the grim reaper of employment (and other such opportunities). However, with that said, there are artists out there who are exclusively interested in delivering a tremendous tattoo; whether or not it prevents you from running for president is the least of their apprehensions.

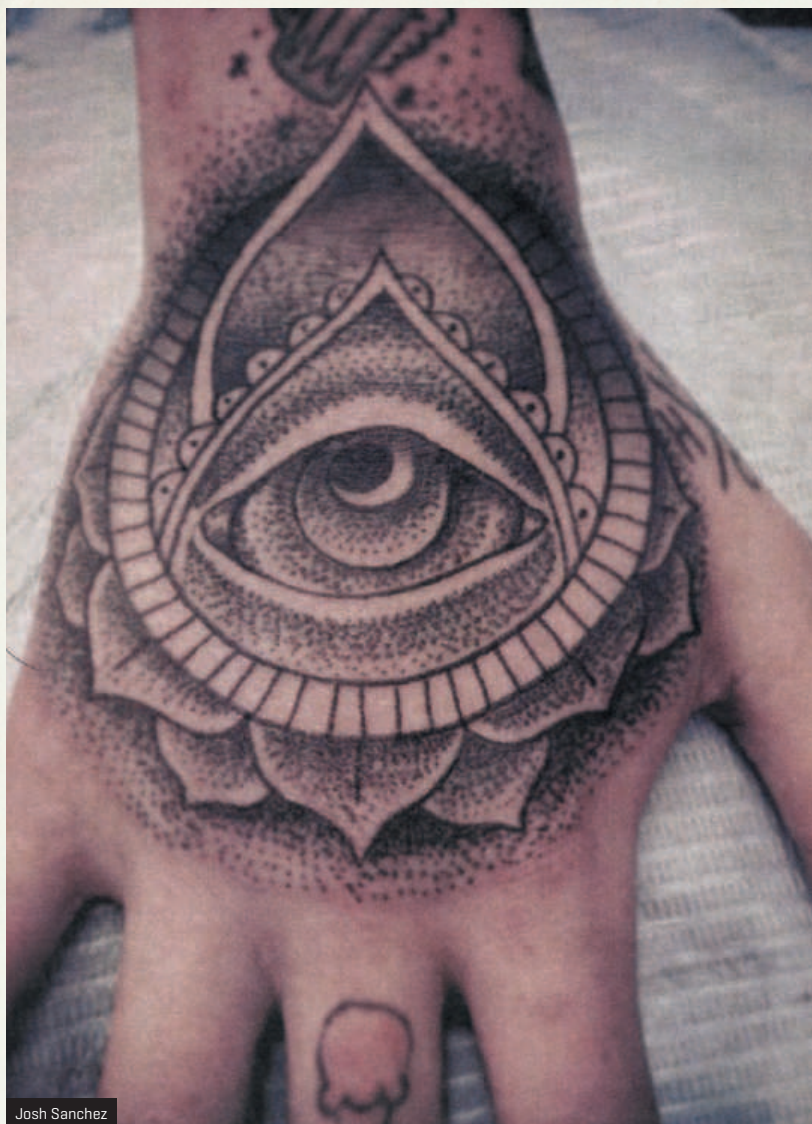
Mikey Tedesco of HB Tattoo: "It's my belief that everyone has the right to do what they want with their own body. I'll always tell the customer up front that getting something in a highly visible spot means that everyone else will be looking at and judging them. If they're cool with that, then I'll decide whether I'm comfortable tattooing that particular design in that specific spot. I don't think I'm in a position to tell someone what they can or can't wear. Tattoos aren't just for the experienced collector, they are for anyone who wants to spend the money, the time, and endure the pain. The only circumstance in which

I'D RATHER NOT DEAL WITH THE HEADACHE. I'LL JUST STICK TO DOING A SOLID TATTOO ANYWHERE ELSE BUT HANDS AND FACES; SOMEONE ELSE CAN HAVE THAT JOB
ROB NUNEZ

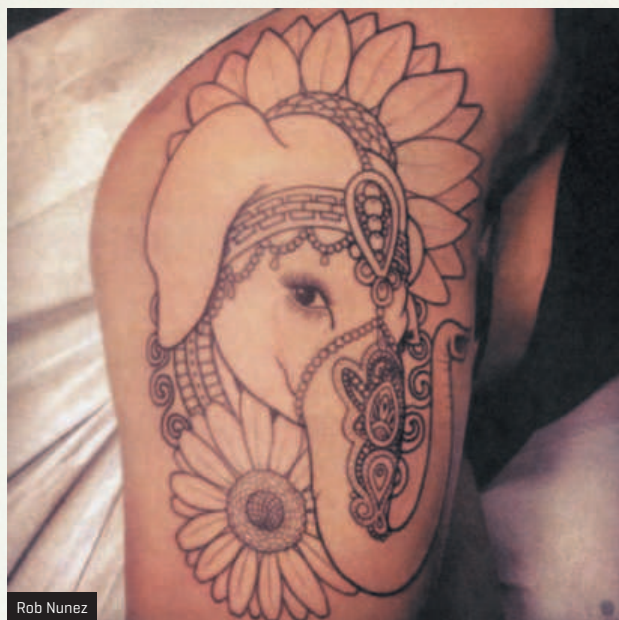


I would turn down a tattoo is if it's something I don't believe I can accomplish to the best of my ability. I just don't understand telling people that they have to have a certain level of experience when collecting tattoos, or that they have to earn the right to a face/hand/neck tattoo. Who am I to determine whether or not someone has or doesn't have 'enough' tattoos? Our purpose is to make art on and for people, not to enforce regulations. We should all just be happy that this is what we get to do for a living."

Josh Sanchez of Balboa Tattoo: "I don't necessarily believe that head, hands, face, and/or neck tattoos are life ruining or job stopping. A tattoo can look elegant and classy depending on the de-



Josh Sanchez



Rob Nunez



Mikey Tedesco

I DON'T BELIEVE IN DICTATING WHERE PEOPLE PLACE THEIR ART, BUT I DO THINK THAT THE CLIENT NEEDS TO BE WILLING TO DEAL WITH WHAT COMES ALONG WITH IT

JOSH SANCHEZ

sign and placement; it doesn't matter if the collector is 'inexperienced' or not. Tattoos, small or large, on faces or on more discrete areas, are pieces of art. Besides, who am I to tell someone what they can or can't do to their body? Now days, tattoos are so much more easily accepted, and I feel like people aren't as shocked or surprised when they see someone that's heavily tattooed. It's truly all about the client though; as long as they walk out of the door happy, that's all I care about. I have a [tattoo] machine tattooed on the top of my right hand because it represents what I do and what I love. Also, on the left side of my neck, I have a black & grey rose; but I've worked hard to be able to have these tattoos. So, no, I don't believe in dictating where



people place their art, but I do think that the client needs to be willing to deal with what comes along with it."

IN CONCLUSION

I think that maybe I tattooed my hand and neck in an attempt to subconsciously burn some bridges. When I'm on the brink of bashing in my computer screen, my tattoos essentially prevent me from running into the arms of something much safer and more secure—they say to me 'you're a writer, whether you like it or not.' My hand and neck pieces remind me that there is no alternative; that I will become who I set out to be, or else become poor. Disclaimer: I don't recommend this method. Kyle Grand, however, has a slightly more insightful approach to inking the utmost epidermis:

"I got my first face tattoo after I had quit working any other jobs and was focusing on tattooing full time. For me, it was symbolic of being... self sufficient. I had both arms covered and I knew that I was never filling out another job application for the man again. I didn't get it because some rapper had it or because I saw it on Pinterest, I got it because I had security." ▣

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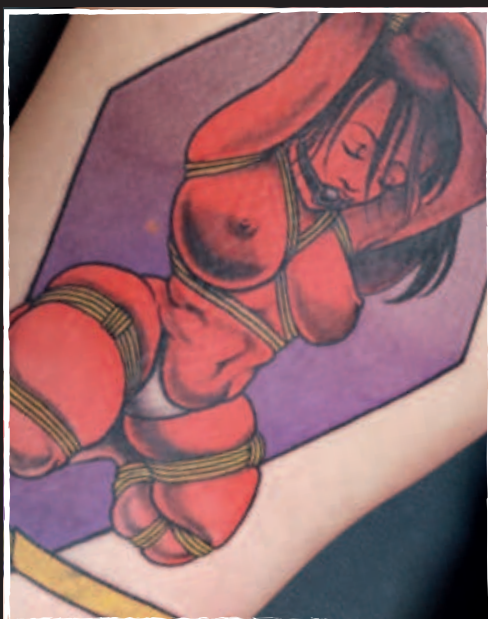
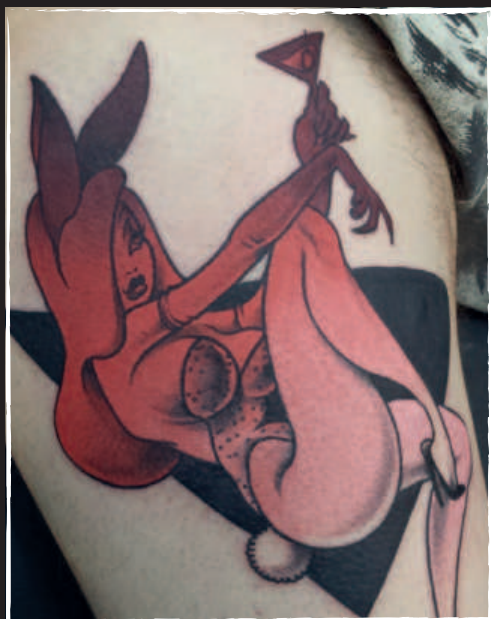
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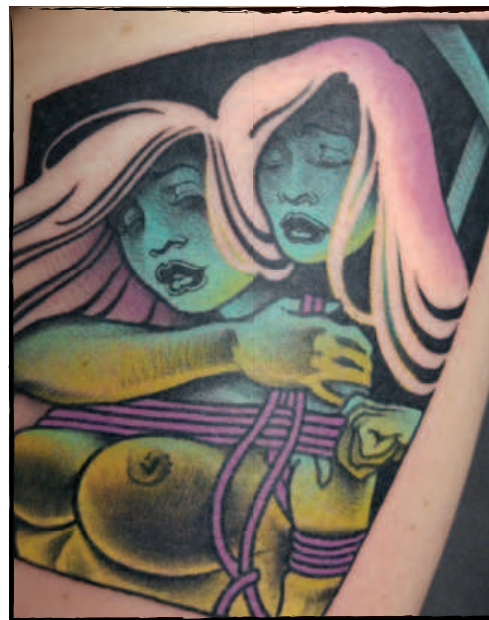


Poster Pussycont

Words: Pascal Bagot • Images: Onnie O'Leary

Onnie O'Leary's work is some of the hottest stuff you can find in the tattoo world. Her images—influenced by comic art—are of beautiful, voluptuous women and are an ode to the female body and beauty, a celebration of desire and pleasure that it is hard not to be receptive to. An enthusiastic traveller, she definitely makes the world warmer tattooing these pin-ups all around the world. Being only 29, this Australian lady is definitely one of the tattoo artists we love to love and it's a real pleasure to introduce her work in Skin Deep





CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HOW EVERYTHING STARTED FOR YOU IN TATTOOING?

Well, I had an interest in tattooing when I was studying in my early twenties. But coming from a small town in Australia meant that getting an apprenticeship at a studio also meant being beholden to one biker gang or another and that scared me away from it. It wasn't until a few years later, in 2011, when I was actually offered the chance to do a more informal apprenticeship in a small private studio in Sydney that I seriously considered it and took them up on it. I had my first tattoo the same year for my 25th birthday. Of course, as soon as I did it I knew that was it for me and I was going to be hooked for life. It was definitely a very informal apprenticeship though, and I left for Amsterdam after a year and got an apprenticeship at Motorink with Celio Macedo in 2012. That was really the beginning of my career.

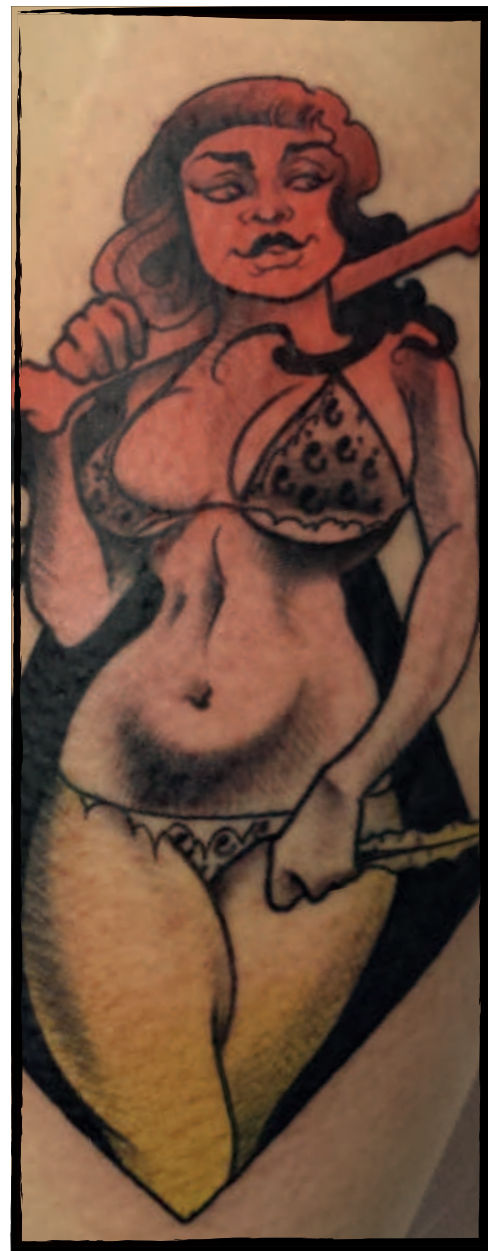
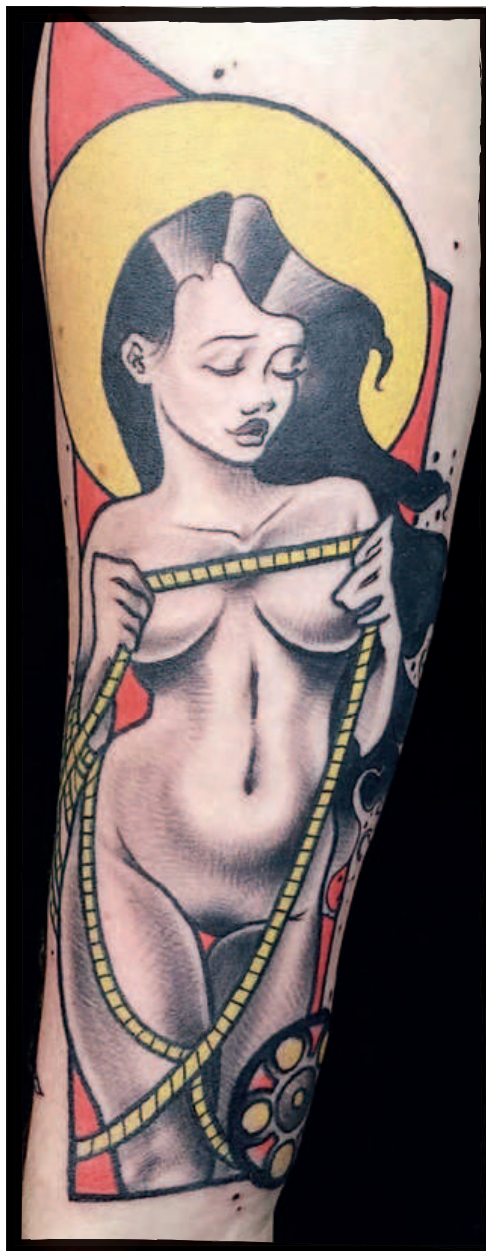
THE FEMALE NUDE IN ART IS ONE OF YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECTS, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT IT?

The female nude is a versatile vessel in the art world. We're used to seeing her embody so many different guises

and concepts—from the Statue of Liberty who represents freedom to the Nike of Samothrace who represents victory—that it's an easily recognisable form. For me it's a source of constant inspiration. I'm fascinated by our response to women's bodies, to sexuality, to how that response can be manipulated. But rather than having these women I draw represent abstract concepts I want them to represent themselves, and all the determination, vulnerability, strength and character that they actually do embody. With a particular emphasis on strength and confidence and sexual identity.

DO YOU HAVE AN ART BACKGROUND?

Yes, I gained my degree in Visual Arts at the Sydney College of the Arts and then a diploma of Fine Art at the Hunter Street TAFE (technical college) in Newcastle. I majored in painting and printmaking, although illustration was always my main interest. University taught me a lot about what I didn't want to do, but through TAFE I was lucky to have some really inspiring teachers who encouraged me to pursue art full time.



YOU'RE DOING PIN-UP GIRLS IN EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Ha ha! Look around, women come in every shape and size! All women are pin-ups, but not all realise that. I spent a lot of time when I was at university looking at pornography because I was finally living away from my parents and no one cared. You'll find every sort of taste is catered for, there is no one thing that is universally sexy. Of course there are traits that I personally like, you might find that it's more common for me to draw women with large breasts, but that doesn't mean that small ones aren't just as sexy. In real life it's not about a woman's body, but her attitude and personality, and that's the hardest thing to draw, but I try.

YOU'RE NOT ONLY DOING PIN-UPS BUT ALSO FEMALE CHARACTERS EXPERIENCING PLEASURE IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS, LIVING MANY KINDS OF ADVENTURES, ALL IN TECHNICOLOR—DID YOU FIND THAT WAS MISSING FROM THE TATTOO WORLD?

It's something that's missing from the world in general.

When we look at the common ways that women are represented, especially sexually, it's as objects or concepts. Their sexuality is offered to us, to appease us in some way, to sell us something, to service us somehow. What does this say to women about their place in the world? That their sexuality is nothing more than a commodity. I want women to see that pleasure is theirs to own, to dispense as they see fit and to enjoy for sake of enjoyment itself. In a sense it's a vision of a sexual utopia, one that I hope becomes closer to reality as time goes by. This is the antithesis of 'slut shaming', it's a celebration of a free and open sexuality and an invitation to take part. This has been the main theme of my work since I started.

DO YOU HAVE LIMITS IN REPRESENTING PLEASURE?

Not in terms of pleasure, however I won't do tattoos of aggressive or hateful subjects, but it depends on the clients intent. I consider each request as it comes. I have limits when it comes to where I'll place tattoos, and I still haven't tattooed any hands or necks, because the I feel that these should be the last places to get tattooed, and



whenever I'm asked I have to tell them to go away and finish their body suit first. It's a real fashion statement these days, and it shouldn't be. In a lot of big cities it's not such an issue. But a friend of mine was visiting some rural parts of eastern Europe and she was refused service in restaurants and shops because of her hand tattoo of a flower. An Australian tourist was harassed and assaulted in India because of a tattoo he had on his leg. We forget how powerful a symbol it is to wear an indelible image on your skin, and the ability to hide or reveal these as is appropriate shouldn't be discarded so lightly.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU DO TATTOOS WITH NO BOOBS IN THEM?

No use crying over spilled milk! I am always happy to be tattooing, whether it has boobs in it or not.

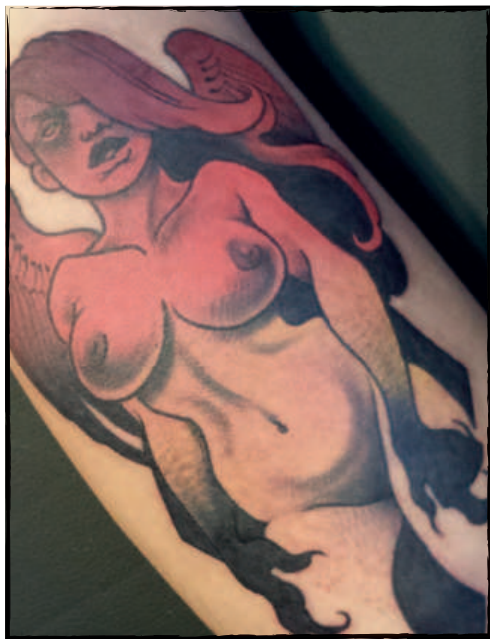
ARE THERE SPECIFIC SUBJECTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO?

I'm really hoping to do more work based around stories people would like to be told. I love it when there's a lot of

meaning behind something. It doesn't have to be all symbols, but pieces that hint towards something more. I don't think I'll ever get sick of doing pin-ups, but I want to take it far far beyond the classics.

WHEN YOU STARTED TATTOOING, YOU ALREADY HAD YOUR IDENTITY AS AN ARTIST, HOW DID YOU MAKE IT FIT TO TATTOOING?

Well, tattooing, like any medium, has its own set of physical limitations. I started by looking at anything I could, trying to figure out what worked, how it worked and why certain aspects of it were so appealing to me. I was lucky to work with German artist Sven Groenewald very early on when I was an apprentice and I learned so much from him and his unique style of application. A lot of it is about working out how to make something very effective, using the least amount of time and effort, because that's being smart, and it's also good for the client. A lot of my design devices come from needing to do quite large pieces quite quickly while travelling. Simple and effective is good for everyone!

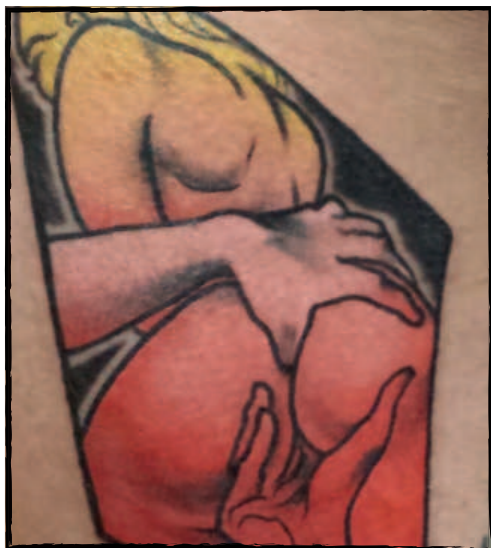


YOU'RE DOING MAINLY FLASH, WHY DO YOU LIKE THAT FORMAT?

Because I travel so much I need to create designs that can be completed in one, or sometimes two sittings at the most. Even now that I'm currently based at Stone Heart in Sydney until mid-2016, a lot of my clients are travelling from somewhere far away to get a piece and can't come back regularly for multiple sessions. Even if I start a large project like a sleeve, I do it in small manageable sections so that if I'm away for a long period of time my client isn't left with a half finished tattoo. It's also very satisfying to be able to complete a piece in one session and see it all finished at the end of the day. I also like to tell a small part of a story with the design, so brevity works well for that purpose too. It doesn't need to be too big to include those few key elements that give a hint as to what is happening. A lot of my ideas come from my clients, and that really is my favourite way to work, to give form to an idea they have and make it my own. It's not always easy, but it is a lot of fun!

WHAT ARE YOUR REFERENCES AND WHERE DO YOUR INFLUENCES COME FROM?

Well, the main one is actually French. When I saw Métal Hurlant at 17 I was captivated, and then I wanted to be the cover artist. I still do actually! The magazine was the first time I'd seen women represented like this, strong, sexual and capable and the stories fascinated me. I loved how each comic panel seemed like a painting or a story on its own. I'm very interested in this implied narrative and it's something I try to create in my own work, although not as successfully as I'd like. It was through the magazine that I found the works of Milo Manara, Moëbious, Frank Miller, Azpiri and all the greats. Their work has all had influence in some way, whether it's their artistic technique, their personality coming through in their work or the characters themselves. The art that I feel most compelled by are comic artists. I'm currently looking at a lot of Mike Mignolas work. A lot of artists from the '60s and '70s, John Romita who drew Spider Man, but more importantly for me Young Romance. Aside from that I've always loved



horror and fantasy, and I'm currently watching *Tales from the Crypt* while I draw in the evenings and trying to make more time to go to the Art Gallery of NSW which is very close to the studio and has some great paintings by Hugh Ramsey and George W. Lambert, who are two of my favourite Australian painters.

ARE THERE TATTOO ARTISTS YOU FEEL CLOSE TO OR INSPIRING?

Oh so many! First and foremost the guys I work with at Stone Heart, Pat Banares, Dean Olling, Chris Veness and Kara Alexis. Our manager Thraxxy is the biggest babe alive, and she's the one who holds it all together. Recently I was lucky enough to be invited to San Francisco by Doug Hardy, who is now a great friend and while I was there I got to meet some artists whose work I'd been following for some time, Greg Dyer especially, who works at War Horse Tattoo for George Campise, who is another incredible artist. Greg and I did a whole bunch of paintings over a couple of days and we're selling prints of them now. Greg is a great person to bounce ideas off and is one of the most prolific painters I know. Then back here in Australia there's Jamie August in Melbourne, who is one of the best tattooers I know. Everything I see of his is just immaculate and he's super humble about it too. Ryan Parsons was a super nice guy to me when I was first coming up. A lot of

influence comes from people who are working hard and being good people in life too. We might have very different approaches to art, but they inspire me to make more of my own!

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BE A WOMAN IN THE TATTOO WORLD?

I've experienced far more sexism in my other professions than in tattooing. The difference being that in a tattoo shop, if someone does something out of line I can call them out on it right away, some guys have been pretty surprised to find out what it's like to be on the receiving end of sexual harassment. But in this industry you're judged more for your ability as a tattooer and gender is secondary, as it should be.

IN EUROPE THERE ARE STILL SOME STRONG STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN WEARING TATTOOS, HOW ABOUT AUSTRALIA?

In warmer countries it's much more common to see all people with tattoos, men and women, so I believe those stereotypes are broken down sooner and exposed as ridiculous. There will always be people who form opinions on what women wear or do, so yes, those stereotypes do exist, even here. However, I feel that at least in the larger, more cosmopolitan cities that it is considered perfectly unremarkable that a woman should have a tattoo. ▣

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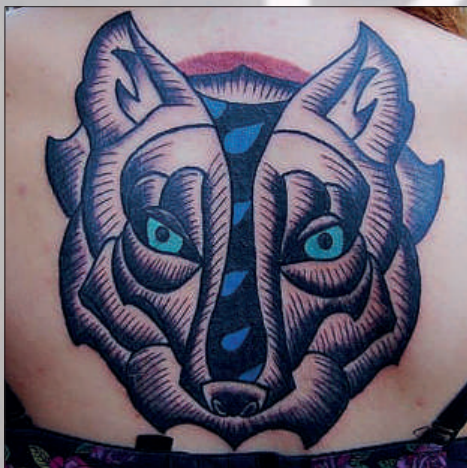
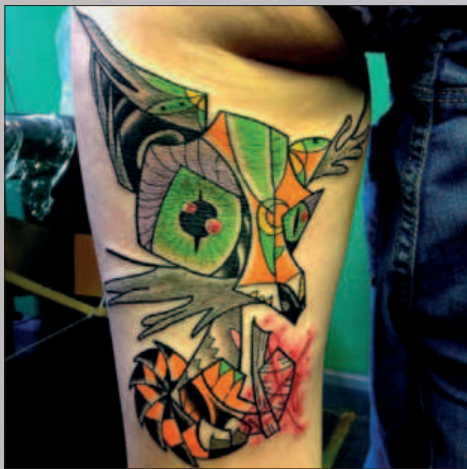
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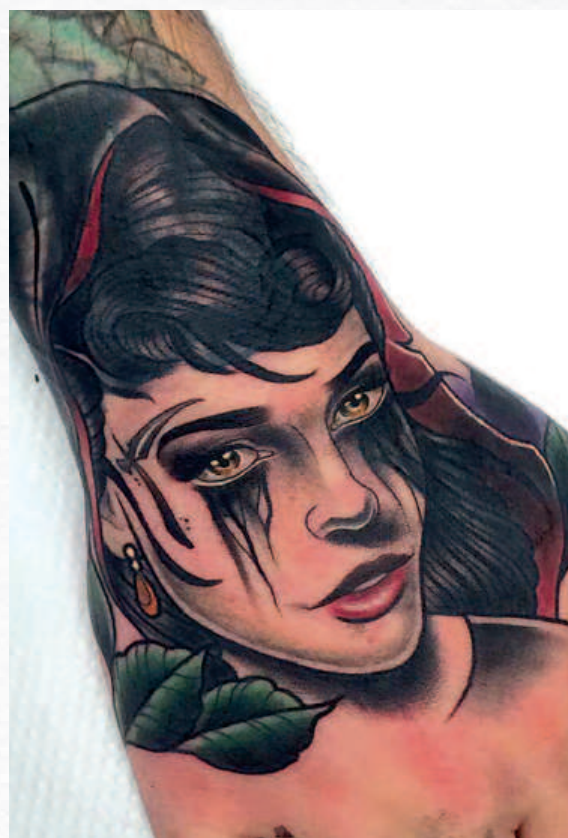
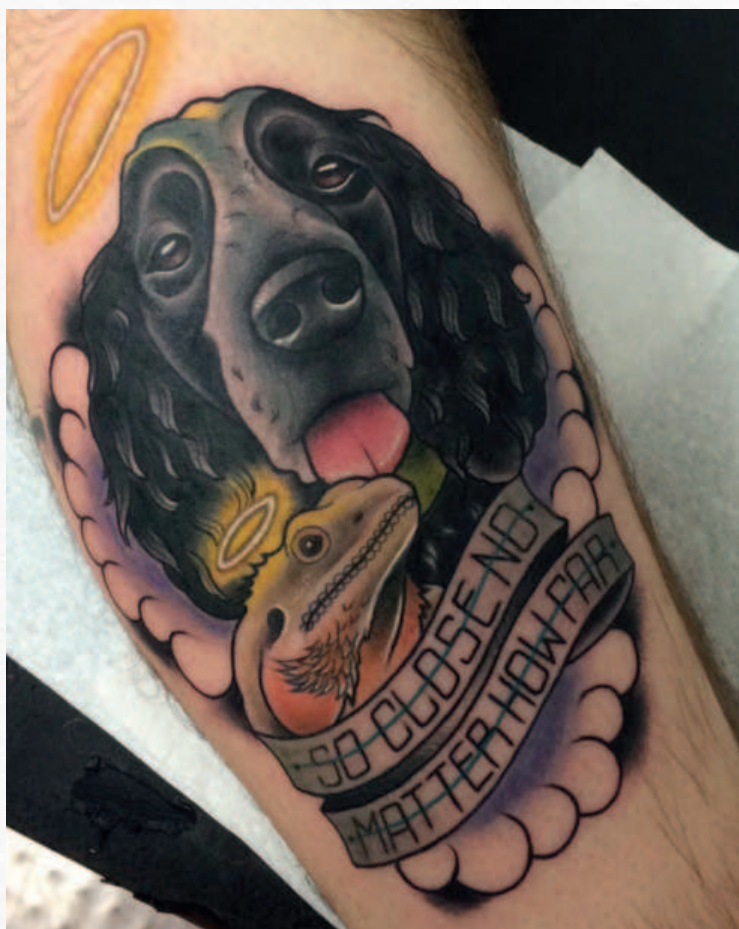
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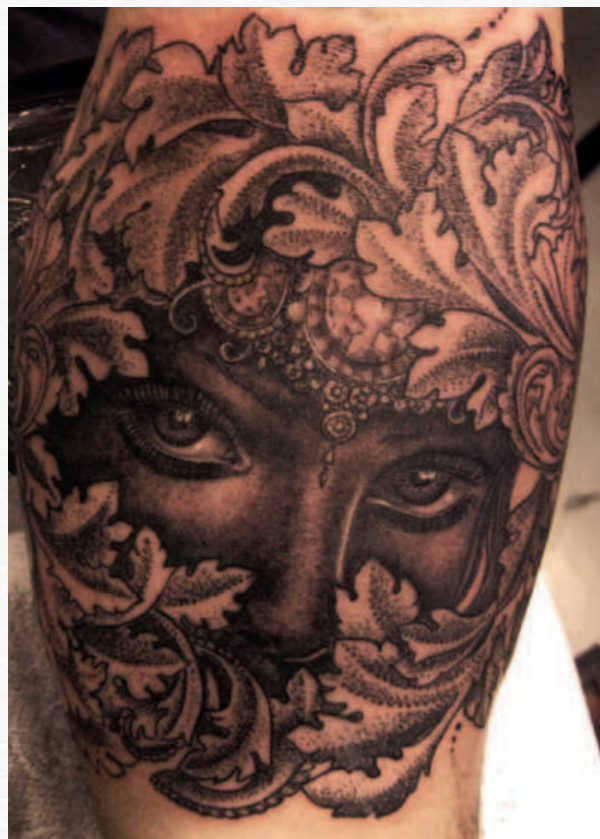
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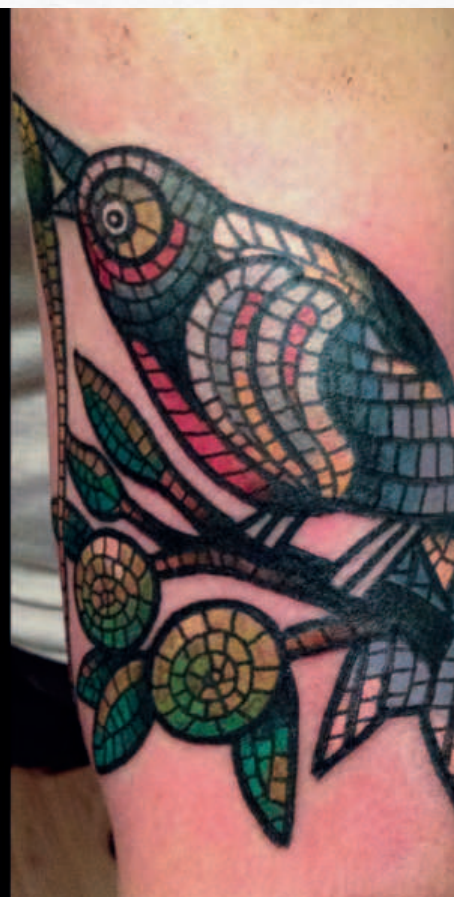
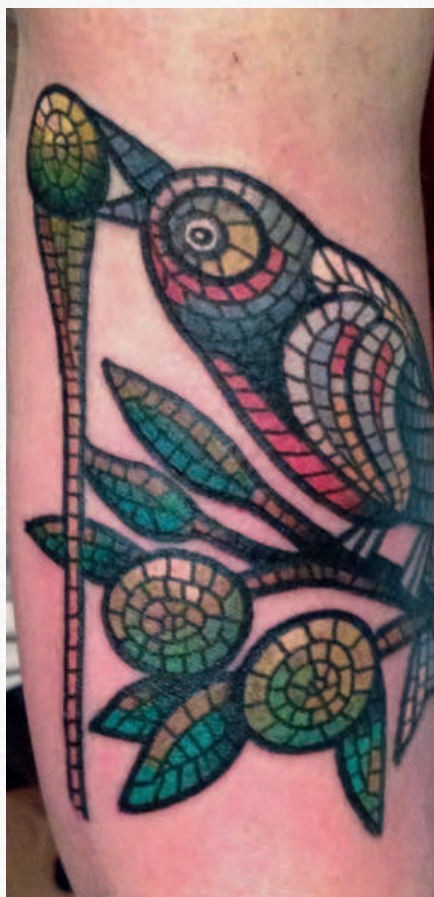
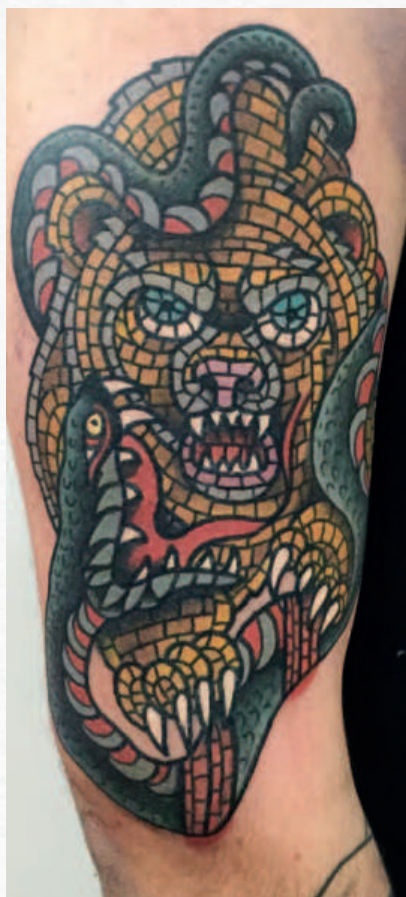
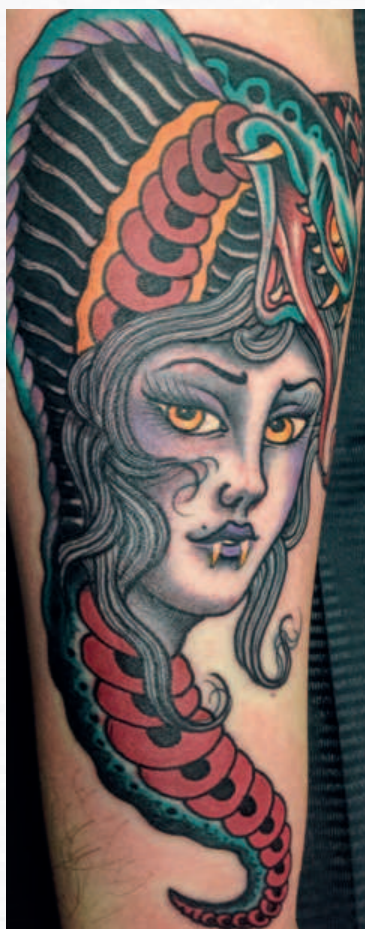


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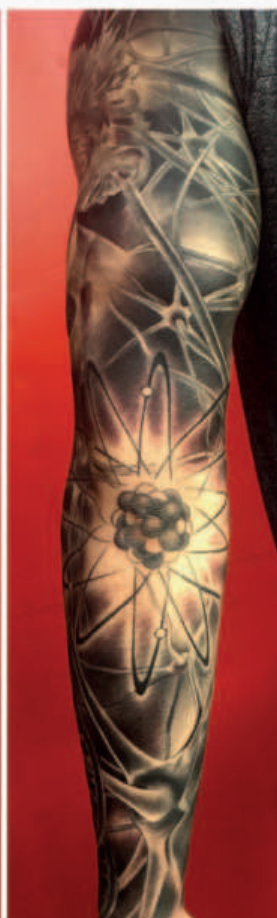
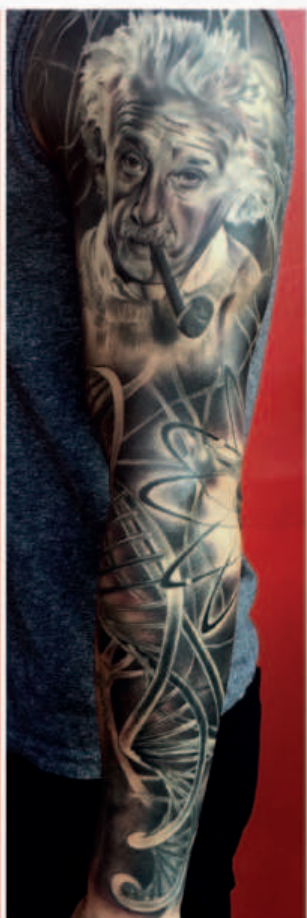
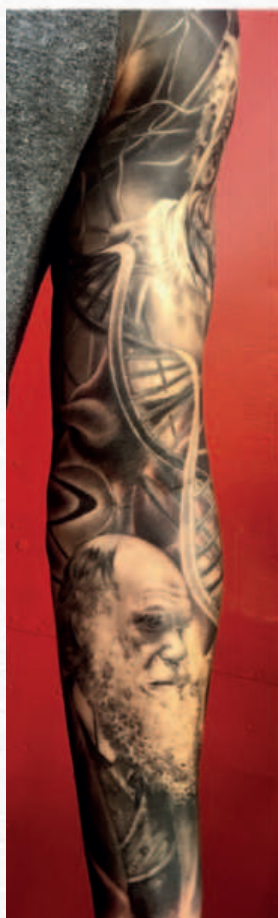
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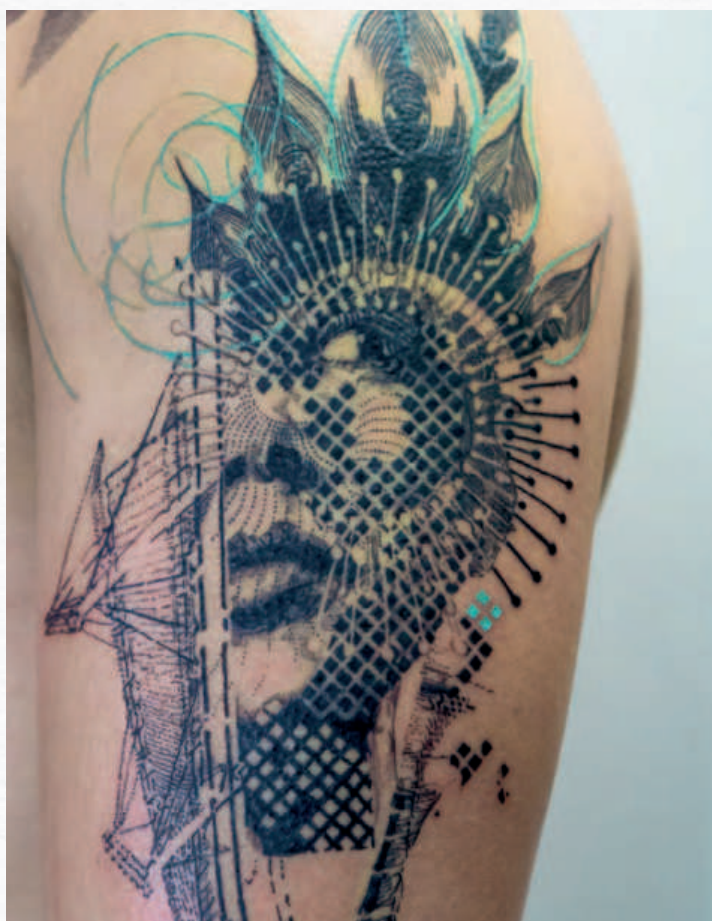
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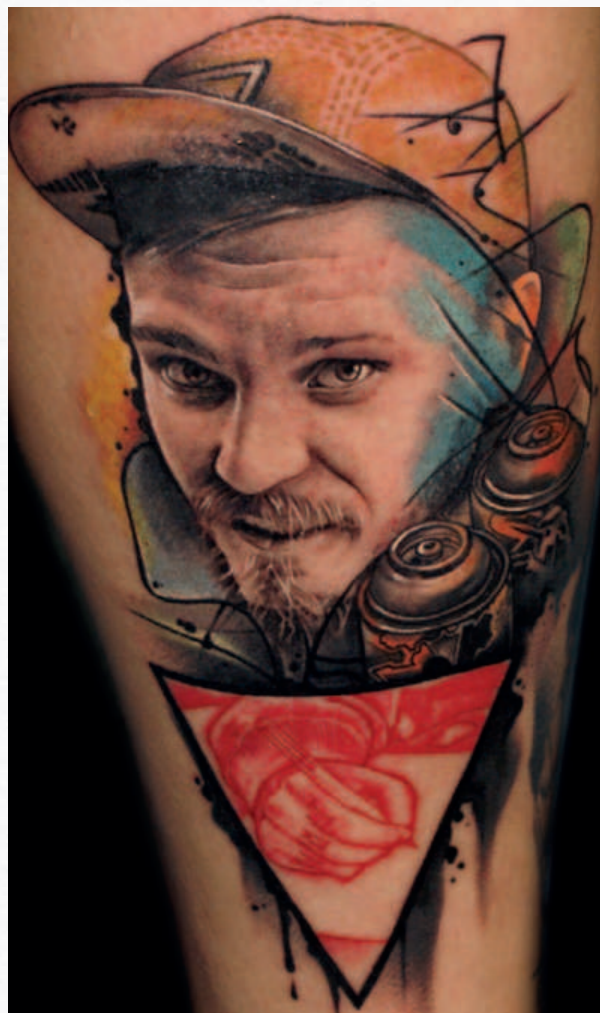




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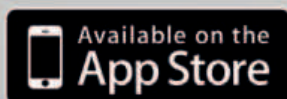
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BREAKING POINT

The beautiful city of Budapest is home to Matyas Halasz and his colourful fragmented tattoos. Nicky Connor finds out how fate and a love of adrenalin changed his path from landscape architecture to tattooist...

Budapest based artist Matyas Csiga Halasz of Dark Art Tattoo never intended to be a tattooist until fate intervened. He was studying at university but life had its own plan, you could say it was literally a lucky break:

"I don't really have too much of an art background. After high school I did two years in a shitty art school learning graphic design but just enough to get the basics. This whole thing happened accidentally—I had never thought about being a tattoo artist until I broke my leg pretty badly and had to skip a whole year at university".

"I was doing dirt-biking that time and messed up a jump, landed on my foot and broke almost all of the bones below my knee. After that, I had to have surgery and couldn't really walk or move so I had a lot of free time for drawing."

Unable to continue with a landscape architecture degree, Matyas made the plan to start his tattoo training, and perhaps now it's obvi-

ous how the geometry of engineering and the beauty of science have filtered into his designs and influence the his work,

"At the same time, I got an offer from Norbert Halasz to learn tattooing. I couldn't really do anything else during that time, it like seemed a good idea to at least try it so I started my apprenticeship in 2007 in Miskolc—a smaller city than Budapest—in a shop called Skin Workshop Tattoo, with Norbert as my mentor."

After leaving Miskolc and moving south, Matyas now works at Dark Art Tattoo in Budapest—Hungary's largest city and famed for a 1000 year old history, baths, pools and beautiful architecture. Located near the

heart of the city, Dark Art Tattoo is also quite a big studio:

"I'm working in a huge studio with eight other guys at the moment."

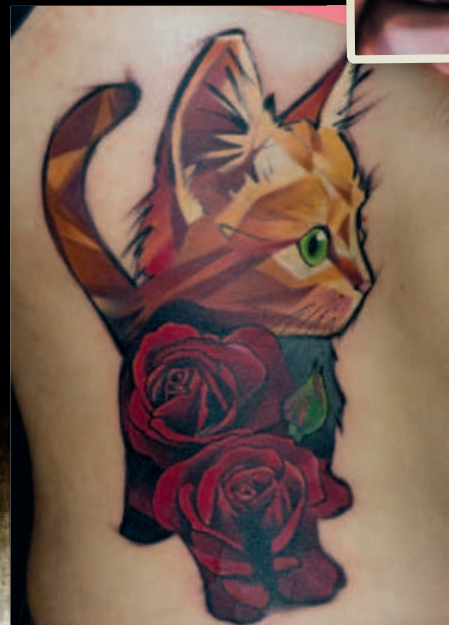
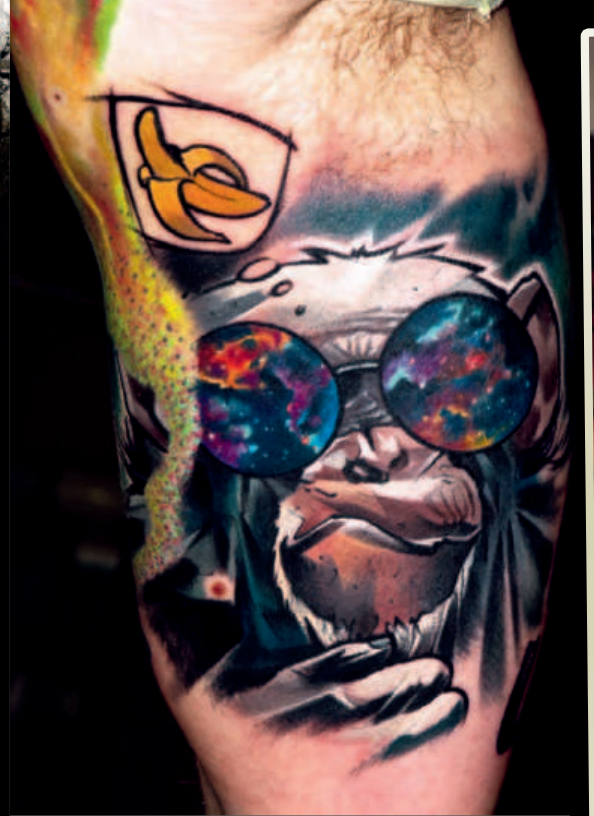
Dark Art Tattoo was opened in 1992 by Zsolt Sárközi, and over more than two decades, the shop has achieved a really good reputation that it still has to this day."

"I can't really wish for a better place to work here in Hungary."

It's one of the oldest shops in the country and is based in the centre of Budapest, but it is still pretty quiet at the same time."

Matyas works as an all round tattoo artist and is comfortable tattooing in many different styles, but looking





**I'M PRETTY MUCH DOING EVERY
STYLE, BUT THESE DAYS I GET
A LOT OF REQUESTS FOR BIG
GEOMETRIC/CUBIST SUBJECT
MATTER—MOSTLY ANIMALS**

at his work you can definitely see he has his own way of viewing the world,

"I'm pretty much doing every style, but these days I get a lot of requests for big geometric/cubist subject matter—mostly animals."

When creating the artwork and the style of his pieces, he uses a mixture of hand drawn

and digital tools in constructing his designs. When describing his work says,

"My workmates always say that I'm drawing with broken glasses, but in fact, when I first did this fragmented colouring, I did it because I was too lazy to add a lot of details in a realistic piece and that would make me lose interest in it.

"I know it's a cliché, but inspiration can basically come from anywhere. You can find it in every single creation in nature if you have good eyes for it. At the same time, I keep my eyes on my favourite artists, no matter if it's a contemporary artist's mural or a renaissance painting or sculpture.

"I never really draw these things beforehand—the final design is always happening



‘live’ on the skin, I just have the main elements—mostly in a Photoshop mock-up.”

Like most reputable tattoo artists these days, to have work done by Matyas there is a waiting list, which is always a mixture of both local and international clients:

“I try to keep my waiting list as short as I can. I’m comfortable with two to three months, that is much easier to handle. At the moment I’m filling up these two-three months and then I’ll close my calendar for a while. I’m not sure that is the perfect way to do it. I’m still looking for the best solution for what makes me and my clients both happy.

“I would guess that at least 30% of my custom is from abroad, but maybe more actually. I’m really thankful to my clients,

they are awesome and always open to my ideas and working methods or whatever else I come up with. I’m also always working late with the designs, but I get a lot of trust from my clients.”

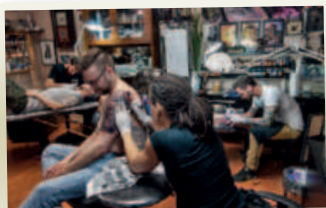
Matyas has also been doing quite a lot of travelling, so he is looking forward to taking it down a notch for a while.

“I traveled enough for more than the first half of 2015, so now I’m happy to be at home and taking it easy for a while, but I’m planning to visit more, new places here in

**MY WORKMATES SAY THAT I’M
DRAWING WITH BROKEN GLASSES**



I KEEP MY EYES ON MY FAVOURITE ARTISTS, NO MATTER IF IT'S A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST'S MURAL OR A RENAISSANCE PAINTING OR SCULPTURE



Matyas Csiga Halasz
Dark Art Tattoo
whoismatyashalasz.com

Dark Art Tattoo
Teréz körút 35, Budapest, Hungary.

Europe and overseas also in the future.”

When asked about artists he admires he said: “There’s too many! It would be hard to pick few ones, but I’ll try: Markus Lenhard, James Tex, Matt Lambdin, Jeff Gogue, Tom Strom... I can always find something in these guys work that amazes me all the time—whether it’s just about the compositions and designing or looking more at their technical skills.”

I wonder if Matyas has any regrets about leaving behind his degree.

“I’m not sure landscape architecture was really for me but the thing I would really like to try is working with wood, making furniture or something. Then again, I don’t have too much free time apart anymore. Apart from tattooing and preparing for work, you can find me doing free ride/downhill long-boarding whenever I get the chance.”

Given that accident earlier on in Matyas’ life, I’m not sure I would be so brave but who knows where good things decide to come from. □

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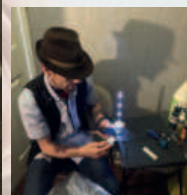
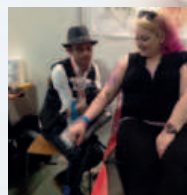
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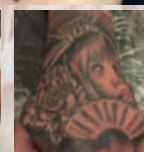
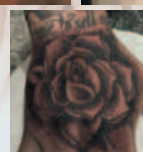
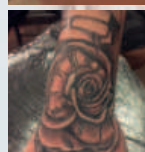
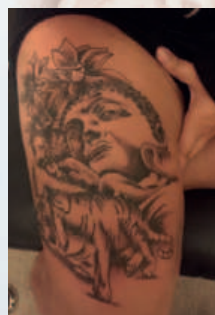
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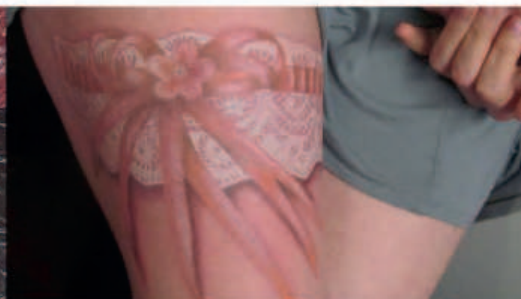


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Chris Jones

BEHIND THE INK

STAR WARS

A long time ago in a galaxy far away (well, Caerphilly to be exact) a young Chris Jones was sitting with his Gramps watching a pirate VHS. The movie was Return of the Jedi and it captured little Chris' imagination in every way possible. Meanwhile, in the US of A, two very different artists, Thom Bulman and James Mullin, were going through similar transformations. Wayne Simmons goes Behind the Ink to chat about the sci-fi series that changed their lives

I was mesmerised from the get go,' Chris says of that fateful day. 'Jabba's palace was so cool. The sexy Twi'lek dancer and Slave Leia (who I swear gave me my first erection). Return Of The Jedi has it all.'

Today, Chris works out of Physical Graffiti, a studio he co-owns in Cardiff, but he's known much further afield for his ink. An official Lucasfilm Tattoo Artist, Chris spends a lot of time working in the States and beyond, opportunities he attributes to one thing. 'My love of Star Wars. If it wasn't for that, I would never have met friends like Mat Difa and Josh Bodwell (who introduced me to Ink Fusion). 2012's Star Wars Celebration in Orlando was where it all started, in fact. I met Marc Draven, Shane Turgeon and Chris 51,' later to be Jones' co-star on the Epic Ink reality TV show. 'And

then there's Jeff Wortham. I owe these guys so much and wouldn't be where I am today without them. Being a Licensed Lucasfilm Artist and tattooing at the Star Wars shows is definitely the highlight of my career. This year was especially awesome, stood with all my friends watching the first trailer for The Force Awakens on a big screen

in a convention centre jam packed with fans. It was electric. I cried. We all did.'

Thom Bulman has a similar story to tell. Today, he owns and works out of Classic Trilogy in Syracuse, NY, but, like Chris, an early viewing of Return of the Jedi set him on his path. 'It still is hands down one of my favourites,' he tells me. 'I remember redrawing those characters over and over again, dreaming of working for LucasArts one day.' That dream came true at this



Chris Jones



All work this page Chris Jones



year's Star Wars Celebration in Anaheim when Thom joined Chris as a licensed Lucasfilm Artist. And that's not all he has to thank Mr Lucas for. 'I was featured in Shane Turgeon's Star Wars themed tattoo book, Force in the Flesh Vol.2, and worked at a show ran by San Francisco toy company, Super 7, based on the Star Wars characters and what tattoos they might get in that universe.'

Toys are where it started for James Mulin, owner of Lotus tattoo in Hemet, California. 'My first figure was Snaggletooth. Then Greedo,' he recalls. A few years later, James' uncle took him to see The Empire Strikes Back and that sealed the deal. 'Creatures like the Tauntauns and the Wampa, and the AT-ATs were fascinating. I also thought Boba Fett was the coolest thing ever! I couldn't wait to get that figure!'

Both Thom and James break the mould a little by working outside of

**BEING A LICENSED
LUCASFILM ARTIST
AND TATTOOING
AT THE STAR WARS
SHOWS IS DEFINITELY
THE HIGHLIGHT
OF MY CAREER**

CHRIS JONES



All work this page Thom Bulman

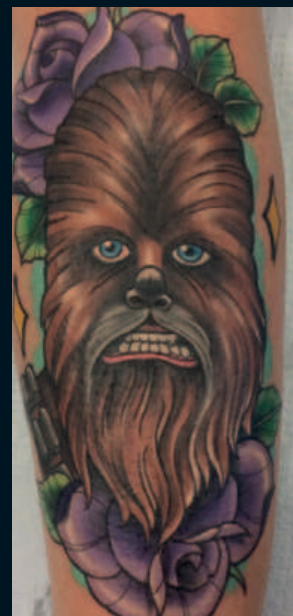
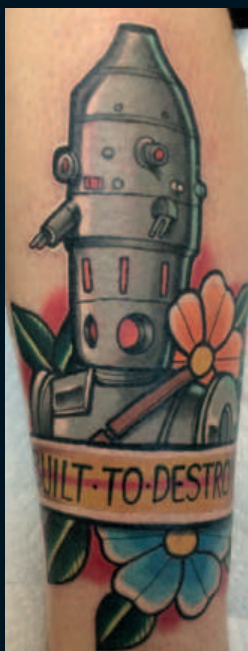


realism—often seen as the default when it comes to capturing a tattoo collector's favourite character or scene from the franchise. 'Yeah, I'm a cartoonist at heart,' Thom explains, telling me he had once, rather aptly, wanted to work for Disney, 'so my tattoos lean more toward that aspect rather than realism. And since I started with traditional, I still carry some of those fundamentals forward into what I'm doing now: heavy on the black and skin breaks are

your friend. But my line work is very new school: lot of line weights and sculpting.' None of that bothers Thom in the slightest, though, his clients for the most part appearing happy to go with what he thinks will work best for their Star Wars tattoo. 'I can do realism too, but I try to talk them into new school, for sure. It's what I'm passionate about. But in the end,' he quips, 'realism or new school, they're gonna get a

**I REMEMBER REDRAWING
THOSE CHARACTERS
OVER AND OVER AGAIN,
DREAMING OF WORKING
FOR LUCASARTS ONE DAY**

THOM BULMAN



All work this page James Mullin

great work of art either way.'

For James, it's a similar story, most of the punters coming to him because of his style, and wanting to see how that could translate to a Star Wars theme. 'They already know from looking at my Instagram what I do. It's what brings them to me, and I'm really lucky. My clients give me a lot of freedom because they know they are going to get something special and one of a kind.'

And speaking of something special, with our artists just days away from catching the much-hyped new entry into the Star Wars franchise as I chat to them, I was keen to hear what they were most excited about, going in.

'Dude, it's gonna be amazing,' Chris enthuses. 'Look at what JJ

I'M TAKING MY KIDS
WITH ME. I WANT TO
PASS THE MAGIC I FELT
ON TO THEM

JAMES MULLIN





Chris Jones



James Mullin



James Mullin



Thom Bulman



Chris Jones

Abrams did with Star Trek. Those movies were awesome and he's gonna do the same with The Force Awakens. The original cast are back, the new actors look awesome and they're using more practical effects instead of just CGI. I haven't been this excited about a movie in my entire life.'

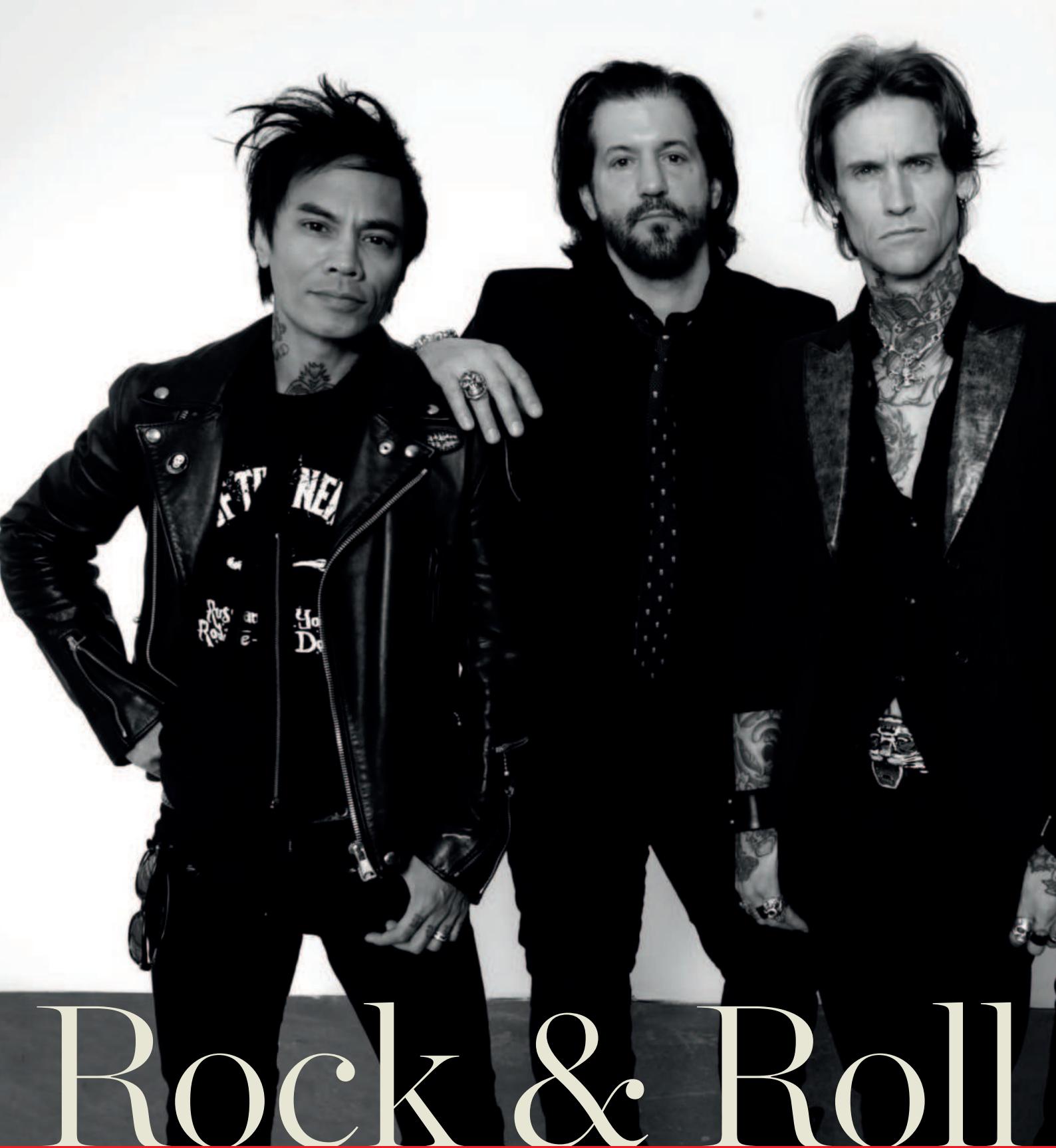
James is perhaps a little more coy. 'I just hope that I'll be blown away and get lost in the universe like I did when I was a kid watching The Empire Strikes Back with my uncle. I'm taking my own kids with me; I want to pass the magic I felt on to them.'

Regardless of your history with these films, it's difficult to remain unaffected by Star Wars right now. Literally everyone is talking about it, the buzz simply electrifying. Some of you will let it all wash over you, of course, but others, I dare say, will be reading this having already planned a little trip to their favourite tattoo artist to mark (literally speaking) the beginning of this new era.

There's no question as to where Thom Bulman stands. 'It's a great time to be a fan and an artist,' he tells me, summing up the mood of his two compadres perfectly. 'May the force be with us all.' ▣

I HAVEN'T BEEN THIS
EXCITED ABOUT A MOVIE
IN MY ENTIRE LIFE

CHRIS JONES



With seven studio albums, a Grammy Award nomination and a two decade-long musical crusade under their belts, Buckcherry are about as rock 'n' roll as they come. Since forming in Anaheim, California in 1995, the band has topped the charts with hits like 'Lit Up' and 'Sorry', shared the stage with everyone from AC/DC to Slipknot and repeatedly proven that, contrary to popular belief, rock is alive and well



Words: Barbara Pavone • Images: Andrej Ivanov/Buckcherry

Revival

Rock is dead.' How many times have we all heard that lame statement? Too many, I'm sure.

Fuelled and inspired by this very pessimism, Buckcherry decided to respond to rock critics in the most perfect of ways: By releasing a record simply (and aptly) titled Rock 'n' Roll. Packed with real, gritty, fun rock tracks, it embodies everything that's great about the genre.

Catching up with Josh Todd before the band's Montreal show, we got the ever-charismatic frontman talking about

the current state of music, the tragic attack at the Eagles of Death Metal show in Paris and, of course, tattoos.

After all, not many musicians can say they have a bond to ink that's quite as unique and life-changing as Todd's. It was his tattoo artist, Kevin Quinn, who first introduced him to guitarist and Buckcherry cofounder Keith Nelson.

CONGRATULATIONS ON ROCK 'N' ROLL—IT'S A KILLER RECORD! NOW THAT YOU'RE SEVEN ALBUMS IN, HAS ANY-



THING REALLY CHANGED?

Yeah, everything changes because we evolve as songwriters and all that. *Confessions*, the record before, is super intense. It was a very emotional roller coaster and I'm so glad we have it, but it was time to have fun again and to make a fun rock record—that's what Rock 'n' Roll is.

I READ THAT THE TITLE ITSELF IS MEANT TO BE A RESPONSE TO THE SKEPTICS WHO KEEP GOING ON ABOUT HOW ROCK IS DEAD, IS THAT TRUE?

That's the thing: Our first record was in '99, so rock and roll hasn't been mainstream since then. When we first came out, people were laughing at us. It was right in the middle of all the '90s shoe-gaze type rock and nerd rock and we came out and everybody told us that rock was dead. It's been a recurring theme over every record for us and it was a title

that Keith and I had thrown around for a few years. So it was just like, 'Let's call it Rock 'n' Roll, that's what we've been doing for almost 20 years.'

WILL ROCK EVER DIE? IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN ACTUALLY KILL IT?

I think that the way it was with arena rock bands and that type of rock is gonna be really hard to achieve these days because everything is so watered down. There's so much information out there, there's no controlled mar-

ketplace anymore, so it makes it very hard to have giant movements. In rock music, at least.

I think it's just not dangerous anymore. Hip-pop and some pop music are more dangerous than the new rock. Where are the 'You Shook Me All Night Long's and 'Love In The Elevator' and songs that are just fun and reckless?

When I try to listen to new school rock radio, first of all, I can't tell what band is what band, everything is really muddy, chopped up, written inside a grid and the lyrics—I can't really tell what anybody's singing about because it seems like they're just bitching about something.

It's not sexual innuendos and fun party time. I see people who want that are all going to electronic music and hip-hop and stuff with beats. That's why it's just kind of boring right now, but it's gotta do that in order to change.

DO YOU THINK WE'LL EVER EXPERIENCE A MASSIVE ROCK RESURRECTION OR HAVE THE TIMES SIMPLY CHANGED TOO MUCH?

Hopefully, there will be a young rock band that will come in and they'll be real. It'll be genuine and there'll be a guitar hero and a really charismatic frontman and they'll have something to say.

There are some bands, I'm not gonna name names, but they're all kind of looking the part and they do their 'I'm a rockstar' type video and then you listen to the song and it's very G-rated, very Disney, and it just doesn't translate for me. But I'm from the older school and these new school kids don't know anything different.

Josh Todd on... Tattoo Artist Kevin Quinn

I spent hours and hours with him, so he's very special [to me] and that's why I stuck with him. He was really cool because, at the time, I was a broke musician, but I wanted to get tattooed so bad, I would take \$200 from my paycheck every couple of weeks and just give it to him. And he'd always give me really great deals because he knew I wanted to be tattooed.



ON A MORE SERIOUS, SOMBER NOTE: WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING LIKE THE TRAGEDY THAT OCCURRED AT THE EAGLES OF DEATH METAL CONCERT IN PARIS, DOES THAT SHAKE YOU? DOES IT STIR THE WHOLE MUSIC COMMUNITY?

I'll tell you what's shaken me. I don't want to get into a whole debate, but there are certain things that need to be phased out and I really believe that religion needs to be phased out. I think all it is now is like this thing for shitty people to hide behind and do horrible things in the name of God or whatever.

And it's not just ISIS. Like two days later, it was fucking Planned Parenthood, someone was getting shot there and it's all so lame. We're really overpopulated, there are a lot of people that have no direction in their life and they're just looking for purpose. Some people feel like this is a great purpose and I don't get it, but it's not surprising to me.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU JUST HAVE TO GO ON AND LIVE YOUR LIFE, RIGHT?

That's the thing: When 9/11 happened, I was on the road. I got up in the morning on the bus and I saw it happening. We had a show the next day and our tour manager was like, 'We need to cancel our show' and I'm like, 'Fuck that, man, all you're doing is empowering these fucking idiots', you know? So I think the best thing to do is for people to show up and keep showing up, but be aware of it.

ABSOLUTELY! NOW, LET'S TALK TATTOOS. ARE YOU STILL ADDING INK TO YOUR COLLECTION? DO YOU HAVE ANY ROOM LEFT?

I got a big panther head on my thigh—it's only outlined, I gotta get it coloured in—but I hadn't been tattooed for like three years prior to that.

IS IT STILL AS EXCITING AS WHEN YOU WERE GETTING, SAY, YOUR FIRST TEN?

No, it's not as exciting. When I was younger, I just wanted to be sleeved and I just wanted to be fucking covered, then it became more about, 'OK, what am I putting on myself? What's the meaning?'. I think anybody who has been tattooed as much as I have has those tattoos that are just shitty. I have a few coverups that I wish I would have thought through a little bit more, but I was too young.

Now it's more about the meaning. I gotta have a connection with the artist. This particular guy—Mark Lettig out of Zen Tattoo in Salt Lake City—[who did the panther head], I had been in a band with him a while back and he was always a really talented artist. He'd sit down and draw these things and I'd be like, 'You gotta tattoo'. So he apprenticed and sure enough, now he owns his own shop. I always wanted to get tattooed by him and finally the stars aligned.

HAVE YOU FOUND YOURSELF SEEKING OUT DIFFERENT ARTISTS OVER THE YEARS OR ARE YOU ALWAYS GOING BACK TO THE SAME SELECT FEW?

Kevin Quinn did the majority of my

Josh Todd on... Pop Music

I love great melodies and singers, so I like pop music a lot — I always have. I just like a great song. Something that makes me feel something. It doesn't really matter what genre it's in. I actually listen to a lot of pop radio because I have kids. I hate to say it, but my daughter, she's nine, likes the new Bieber song. And we like The Weeknd and Bruno Mars.



work out of California, but I've gotten a few pieces from artists around the world. Like the big dragon head on my leg that Horiwaka did in Japan for the millennium new year, which is the year of the dragon. He did it traditional with a bamboo stick, so that was really cool. Like 90% of his clientele is the Yakuza!

Josh Todd on... His Hand Tattoos

Kevin Quinn has a butterfly on his hand and I always loved it, so I go, 'Would you mind if I completely ripped off your butterfly?' and he said no. That was kind of a bonding thing with him. I love roses and this is a shooting star, which is always rad. I was a huge fan of the movie *Outsiders*, as well as the book, and there's a Stevie Wonder song called 'Stay Gold', as well as a Robert Frost poem, so that's what I got [on my fingers].

HOLY SHIT. HOW DID YOU SET THAT UP?

We asked the promoter there and said we knew who Horiwaka was because he had tattooed some pretty famous musicians, on top of knowing who he was from the tattoo world.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE, TO SAY THE LEAST!

You get tattooed in his apartment. You go in and he has apprentices there and they're these Japanese dudes in black karate suits and they're tattooed from their neck lit-

erally to the ends of their fingertips. They just sit on their knees and they don't say a word until he says something and then they go and do it for him and come sit down—it's crazy. It was really intimidating. I felt like some crazy karate fight was gonna break out any second.

I'M CURIOUS: IF ONE OF YOUR KIDS CAME TO YOU AND SAID 'I'M GETTING A NECK TATTOO', HOW WOULD YOU REACT? WOULD YOU PULL THE PARENT CARD OR LET THEM DO THEIR OWN THING?

My oldest daughter's 21 and she's got a few tattoos, but nothing crazy. I'm cool with it—what am I gonna say?!—but if she wanted to get her hands or neck done, I'd have something to say about that.

I think once you cross that line, you better be ready. You better know what you want in life. I knew exactly what I wanted to do and part of it was I just wanted to have no safety net. I wanted to cut off every avenue of going back to the real world. It was a big risk, but I wanted to just go for it.

HOW LONG DID YOU WAIT BEFORE YOU TOOK THE PLUNGE AND TATTOOED YOUR NECK AND HANDS?

I was sleeved already and I had a back piece, then it was time to go! I've done a few movies and in one they took away my hand tattoos with makeup and I fucking hated it. I hated the way my hands looked without them. I remembered why I wanted to have my hands done: I wanted them to look cooler than they do.

[As Todd's cell phone rings, he apologises and kindly



asks if we can pause the interview for a moment. It's his nine-year-old daughter on the line.]

IS IT STRANGE HAVING TO SWITCH BETWEEN BEING A DAD AT ONE MOMENT, THEN HEADING OUT ON STAGE AND KICKING ASS? DO YOU HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR MINDSET IN ANY WAY?

Yeah. I have a regimen I do every night, I call it my Hour of Power, and I do the same thing every night to change my state of mind to become that animal out there.

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DOING THIS FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES, DOES GETTING ON STAGE STILL PHASE YOU AT ALL?

All the time. And I don't want it to go away because then I would be like, 'I don't wanna be here. Why am I here?' But the great thing is you get to this place where sometimes you have to just have complete faith that it's going to work because nothing is telling you that it will. Maybe you're sick or something's going on and you're like, 'I don't know if I can do this', but you just gotta man up and show up.

Most of the time you get to this place you didn't think you could go and those are really amazing moments because then you're like, 'If I can do that, what else can I do?' That's really cool.



HAVE YOU EVER FOUND YOURSELF PERFORMING AND THINKING, 'WOW, THIS CRAZY CAREER CHOICE ACTUALLY FUCKING WORKED OUT'?

I've had those moments and it's like everything's going on in slow motion. I'm having a conversation with myself and I'm performing and I'm just like, 'Thank you, this is awesome, this is everything I wanted'. It doesn't happen all the time, but it's good when those moments come together.

CONFESSIONS WAS RELEASED IN 2013, THEN YOU PUT OUT THE FUCK EP IN 2014 AND NOW, ROCK 'N' ROLL—IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS WORKING ON SOMETHING. WHAT'S NEXT?

The music business has changed so much, it's just so different. The way to make a living is to be on stage; You can't just sit around and collect checks anymore. But we need to just chill for a while and we're working on learning how to not be such workaholics.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, BEFORE YOU HEAD OFF TO THE MEET AND GREET, PLEASE FINISH THIS SENTENCE FOR ME: JOSH TODD IS...

[Pauses] God, you know, I don't wanna say anything like what I do to pump myself up because that would make me sound really arrogant. Josh Todd is... a loving father, husband and very grateful frontman of this great band, Buckcherry, that I'm so happy I get to stand in front of and showcase my talents every night. I say that to myself every day: 'I'm grateful. I'm grateful for tonight's opportunity. Whatever it's gonna be, it's gonna fun.' ▣



AN AMERICAN HOMESTEADER

It is ten o'clock in the morning and I am nearly running late for my tattoo appointment with Mike Adams. Being unfamiliar with the traffic from northern Virginia, to Frederick, Maryland, I am stressing out about getting to the shop on time



Frederick is a quaint town about 45 minutes outside Washington, DC. Glancing down at my car's clock, I subtract the fourteen minutes ahead I program to avoid lateness, and am now counting on that extra saved time. Homestead Tattoo, Mike Adam's private studio is in an unassuming location, and after a bit of exploring, I find my way, apologising for my ten minute lateness.

The shop is carefully decorated with a waiting room area, as well as a separate tattooing room. Mike's interest in American antiques and American traditional tattooing is obvious. After introducing myself, I explained my design idea to him, and

he was immediately enthusiastic. It falls in line with the work he loves to create.

When I made my appointment with Mike, I had initially decided on a rose. Mike's roses are beautiful and simple. Whenever I choose an artist, I like to get something that they like to tattoo, where they can show their talent and style. As the weeks passed and I studied his collection, I became more enamoured with his portraits of women. They seemed to be simple, beautiful, with longing or sadness in their faces.

I have studied Mike's work for years, since that fateful day when I found a stippled fox portrait atop a geometric flower on Pinterest and fell in love





MIKE NEVER DRAWS PIECES AHEAD OF TIME BECAUSE PEOPLE ALWAYS END UP CHANGING THEIR MINDS IN THE SPACE BETWEEN WHEN THE TATTOO IS SCHEDULED AND THE APPOINTMENT TIME



with his American traditional, but unique style. However, when one knows she is going to be tattooed by an artist she admires, a greater sense of urgency and keener discretion follows, which is perhaps why I changed my mind from a rose to a woman's portrait, specifically my great-grandmother.

Mike is quick and responsive to my idea. Standing in the waiting room, I emailed him a photo reference of my great-grandmother, and he drew it up, an immaculate outline that captured her expression perfectly. He threw in a rose along the bottom, since I had initially wanted a rose, framing the piece nicely. He said that he never draws pieces ahead of time because people always end up changing their minds in the space between when the tattoo

is scheduled and the appointment time. I couldn't argue with this, as I was a predictable example of someone changing her mind.

Homestead Tattoo was named after Homesteaders—people who left where they were, found a plot of land and built a house, along with everything in it. The idea of being self-sufficient is appealing to Mike, and it is clear in his work and his lifestyle. Mike makes his own machines and the apron he wears when he tattoos. He and his wife own and operate an Etsy shop where they make tote bags, clutches, business card holders, and other personal and home items, alongside of selling antique and vintage goods (etsy.com/shop/adamstradingco). When I comment about going to a local doughnut shop, he tells me that he made their doughnut display case.

I have just two photos of my great grandmother, who was a dancer, model, and actress in the 1920's, performing on Broadway in New York City. In fact, she was part of Ziegfeld Follies and a Radio City Music Hall Rockette. Her stage name was Billie Ball.

We talked about placement, and I said I wanted it on my right deltoid. Because of the size, slightly larger than a palm-sized piece, he said it would look better on my front fore-

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arm. There would be too much negative space if I placed it high on my arm where the muscle rounds. After the hesitation that comes with an unplanned placement, I decided to trust him and go for the front forearm.

The stencil that Mike laid on my skin was absolutely beautiful. It looked almost finished, which gave me great confidence. Sometimes a stencil is just a shadow of a tattoo, but Mike's stencil felt complete, with the line work where it needed to be.

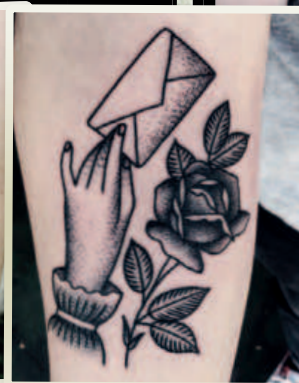
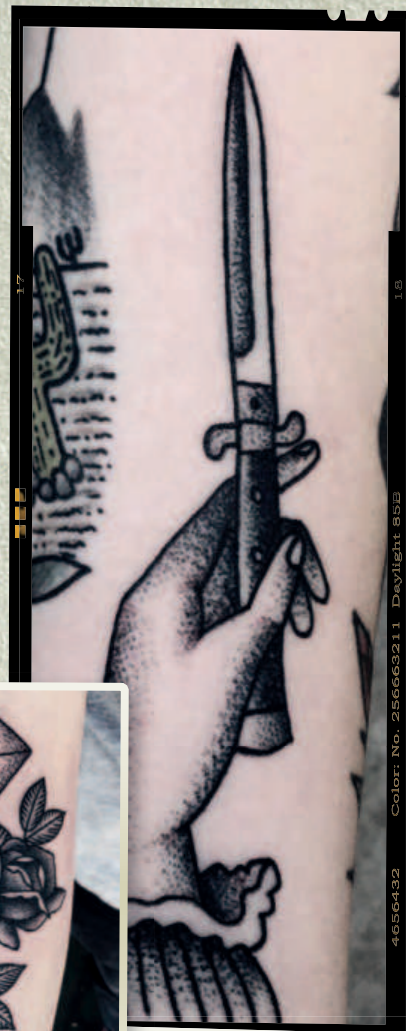
Mike's tattooing is speedy but precise. We chatted about his influences, style, and what made him the tattooer he is today. I was impressed with his control, and attention to detail. He comes off as grounded, and hard working, and seems to approach each piece with sensitivity. He is committed to making everything the best it can be, whether it is a tattoo, a cardholder for Adam's Trading Co., or a tattoo machine.

While the outline was being completed, I noticed that Mike's tattooing felt pretty light-handed. It could be my own pain tolerance or the tattoo's position, but I was comfortable. The stippling, however, felt a bit less comfortable. The needles felt like they were raking across my skin and were the only true discomfort I felt. Perhaps it was because I had never experienced a sensation like it. At the same time, at no point did I have to take a break and I looked forward to the reward of a beautiful tattoo.

Since the stippling was not captured in the mock up, I was especially interested to see how that would look and how the effect was created. I had envisioned a single poke method with hundreds of small dots applied manually, which seemed painstaking. When Mike finished the outline and began work with the stippling, it was with a machine that had been programmed to stipple instead of shade, and the process looked similar to shading.

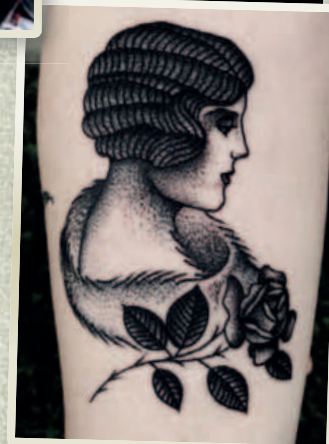
Stippling in traditional pieces seems to be a unique addition to the American traditional style. Mike had started working with stippling in 2011 or 2012 when a friend asked for stippling in his traditional piece. Although he had experience with stippling mandala style geometric pieces, those did not have outlines, so Mike thought that a traditional piece with an outline would not look right with stippling. His friend insisted, and it turned out great. Although he does not utilise stippling in all pieces, for me the use of stippling is interesting.

Looking at Mike's exceedingly popular In-



stagram profile, I noticed that many of his tattoos are palm-sized, while so many tattoo artists seem to be displaying huge pieces. He told me that the size is good for a tattoo and is actually indicative of earlier American Traditional tattoos.

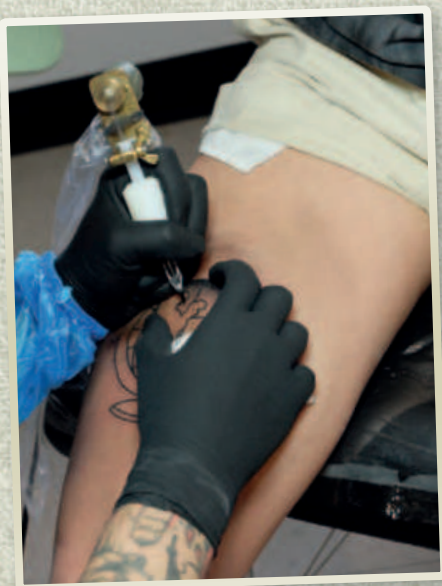
Not only that, but many of Mike's clientele are collectors. They are adorned with a collection of tattoos from artists that they have researched and admired. Often traveling great distances, tattoo collectors relish the talents that the artist possesses, and each tattoo is often more about the art than a particular meaning. It is not a tattoo that any artist could produce. And, that is another reason why Mike likes tattooing palm-sized pieces, that way people can get tattooed by all of the artists they want to "collect." He leaves space for the many other talented tattooers (although, if you want a



THE STIPPLING, HOWEVER, FELT A BIT LESS COMFORTABLE. THE NEEDLES FELT LIKE THEY WERE RAKING ACROSS MY SKIN



FOR ME HER IMAGE IS ONE OF A REBELLIOUS WOMAN WHO HAD HER SIGHTS SET ON THE ARTS. SHE WANTED TO DANCE AND ACT. SHE WAS UNINHIBITED



full back piece from him, he certainly will not turn it down).

Mike apprenticed under Eroni Veritas. Along with the basics, Eroni taught Mike how to fix machines to make them run in a customised way, and he began to make his own. He makes them small and compact. While some people prefer heavier machines, because it steadies their hand out more, Mike finds the small ones to be less detrimental after long periods of use. When he makes them, he tries to make each one better than the last. Mike has now been

making machines for about eight years and sells them on his website to other tattooers, along with tattoo-related merchandise (mikeadamstattoo.bigcartel.com).

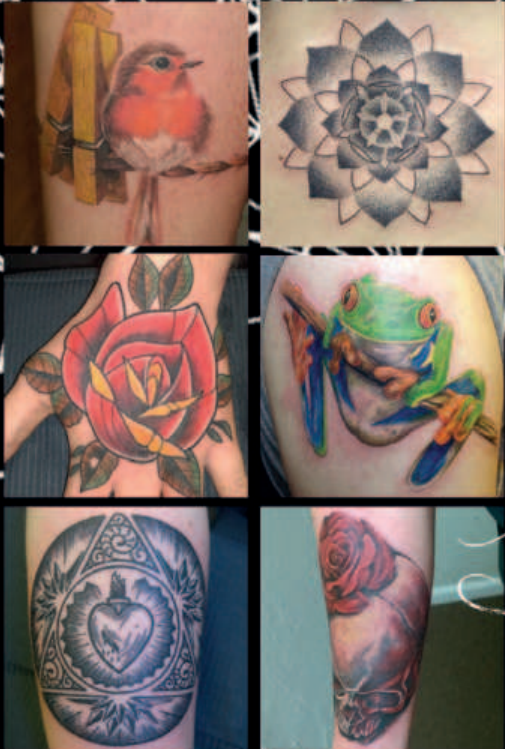
Making each thing better than the last seems to be a constant in Mike's line of work. He works on his craft, learning from each experience. His hustle is apparent, as is his ambition and work ethic. He visibly cares about every project he sets his mind to.

Once my tattoo began to materialise, I was happy that I agreed to take Mike's advice about placement. The piece fit better on my forearm and seemed to compliment the tattoo I have running up the side of that arm, eucalyptus and ranunculus by Rochester, New York-based tattooer, Pamela Carol. Upon completion, I actually liked the surrounding tattoo better with Mike's addition. The slight contrast of styles and subjects, along with the negative space between the two tattoos worked so well together.

After a little over an hour, Mike finished my tattoo. It was more beautiful than I could have imagined. Her expression is perfect, eyes lowered, finger wave hair, and just the right amount of shading using stippling. She is timeless and vulnerable.

I never met my great grandmother, so for some it might seem like a strange choice, or maybe just a convenient one. Her portrait matches the aesthetic of the tattoo artist I chose. I do not necessarily believe that tattoos have to have meaning. They can just be beautiful. However, for me her image is one of a rebellious woman who had her sights set on the arts. She wanted to dance and act. She was uninhibited. She posed nude in a time when modesty was expected, and later married a man whom her family had deemed to dark-skinned, because she loved him. He was a photographer, just off the boat from Portugal. She did what made her happy. She chased her dreams. Her life was inspiring and tragic, but well lived. The rose she sits atop feels so romantic to me, like a flower thrown on stage. She was never the headliner, but I bet she loved every bit of praise.

Even though tattooing is a trade, I feel so fortunate to be able to carry this with me. It is a gorgeous piece. I am grateful that Mike cares so much about his work, that it is his passion, because that comes through in his work. His tattooing is a great example of Traditional American, while at the same time being uniquely his own. He is a Homesteader in his private shop, using machines he built himself, wearing the apron he made. ▣



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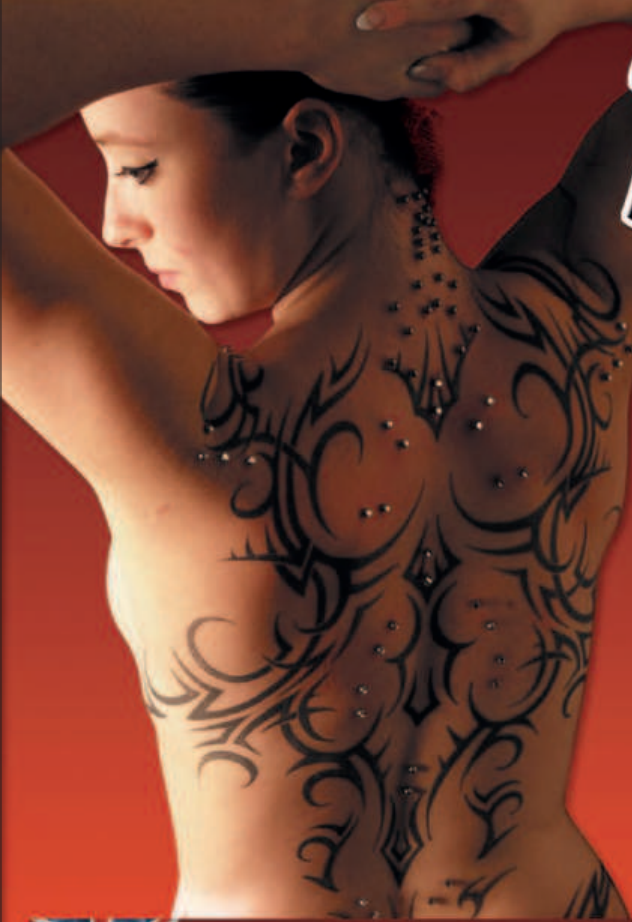


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Colin Dale

Skyclad

"Celtic is a magic bag into which anything may be put and out of which almost anything may come."

JRR Tolkien



The Riders of the Sidhe
Tempera on canvas
John Duncan, 1911
© Dundee City Council [Dundee's Art Galleries and Museums]

With more symbolism and mystery attached to it than perhaps any other 'race' of people on earth, being a Celt is often misunderstood in the extreme. With a groundbreaking exhibition coming to a close at the British Museum this month, we ventured out to see what we could bring to the table by way of explanation...

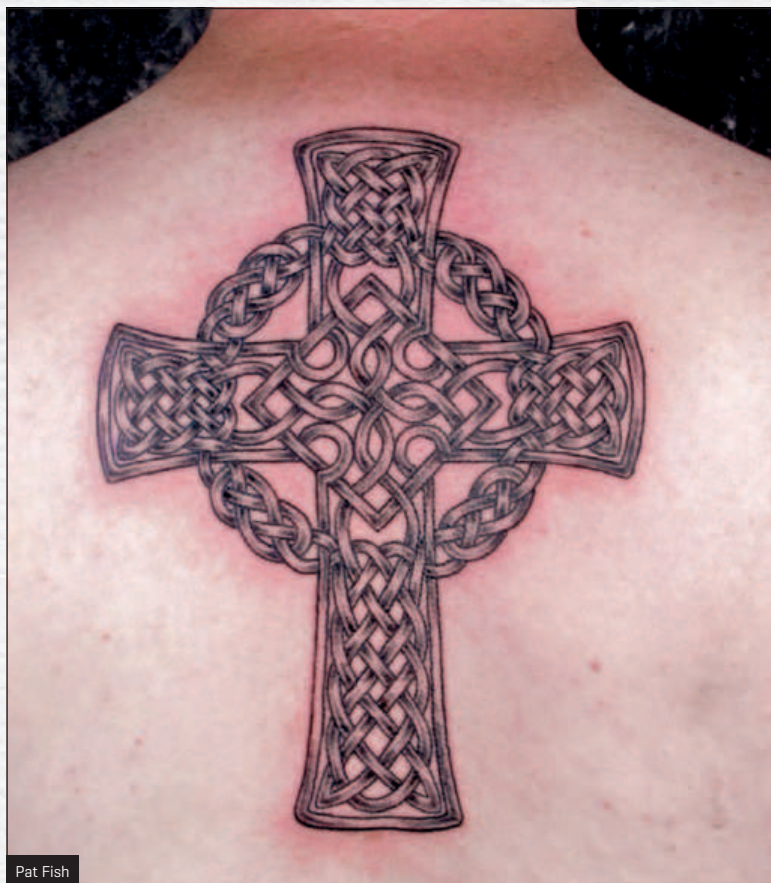
Before the Greeks, before the Romans, before the Vikings, the Celts were the dominant force in Europe. Golden-haired, hard-drinking, hard-fighting warriors who went into battle tattooed and skyclad. Once, their influence stretched from the Caucasus Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. Today, Celtic culture clings to the fringes of Western Europe like a man outnumbered in a brawl: bloodied, backed against a wall, but strong and still standing.

Emerging around 1000 BC, the Celts weren't a single 'race' but rather a network of tribes fused together by common beliefs, arts, and languages. The Romans called them Gauls. They may—or may not—have called themselves Celts.

Were the ancient British Celts? Probably. Although no one knows when and how Celtic culture arrived in the Isles. What we do know is that Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Wales remain the last



Pat Fish



Pat Fish



Pat Fish



Pat Fish

Those singularly beautiful curves, more beautiful perhaps in the parts that are not seen than in those that meet the eye, whose beauty is revealed in shadow more than in form...

strongholds of an Iron Age people whose unique world view resonates through the ages.

Celtic culture may have all but vanished from mainland Europe but, in these isolated islands, it thrives. In fact for many Brits, 'Celtic-ness' lies at the very core of our being. We express it daily in our language, our clothes, and our choice of tattoos. It's a heritage that draws on the past, both real and imagined. And even if that 'Celtic-ness' is a mish-mashed cultural construct, it's still powerful enough to make the blood roar.

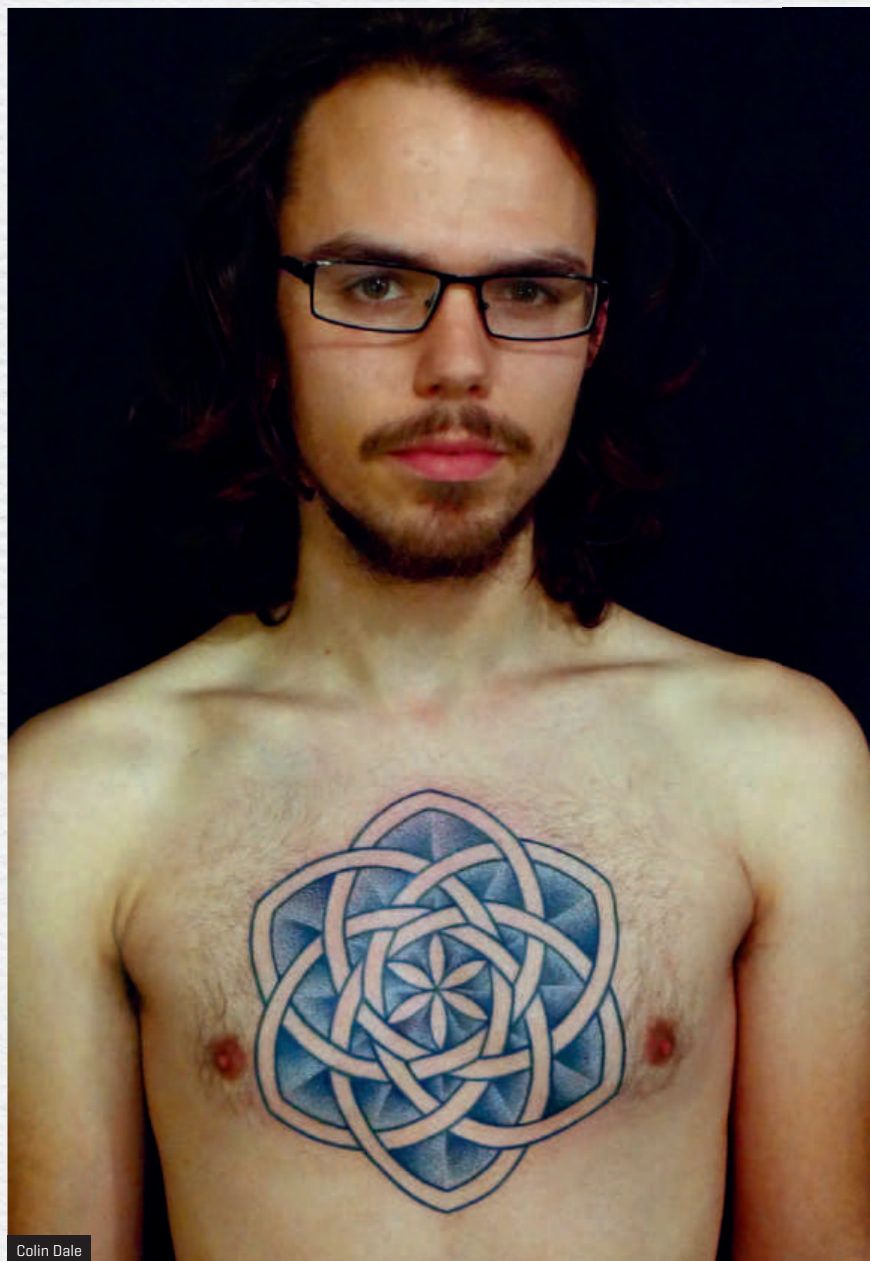
POWER AND GLORY

The Celtic art that we know, comes from burials or ritual offerings made in sacred rivers, wells, and groves. While

much of this was art made to impress, rather than for everyday use, it provides us with a unique snapshot of the Celtic psyche.

Although it varied from region to region and century to century, some elements remain consistent. In contrast to the classical images of Greece and Rome, Celtic art is a riot of confusion. Animals and vegetation merge, forms twist, fantastical beasts play peek-a-boo inside tangled knots. It's beguiling. It's ambiguous. It's complex.

As the historian John Mitchell Kemble noted, in Celtic art there's much to be seen in the unseen: "those singularly beautiful curves, more beautiful perhaps in the parts that are not seen than in those that meet the eye, whose beauty is revealed in shadow more than in form." To the



Colin Dale

Celtic figurines and coins frequently depict images with tattoo-like marks on their torsos and face

Celts, the world was one in which man and nature, the real and the spiritual, sat side by side and their art is a reflection of this.

Nature, trees, and animals were of huge significance. Boars, dogs, bears, stags, and horses were especially important and their forms can be found on everything from drinking vessels to battle horns. A helmet found in Romania, has a bronze eagle attached to its top, with wings that flapped as the warrior ran. Another, from Tintignac in France, is in the shape of a swan. Not exactly practical but, as the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus commented, such helmets “lent the appearance of enormous stature to the wearer” while ‘channelling’ the power of the animal totem. Power, virility, independence, and all that jazz.

The Celts believed in rebirth and their artists used im-

ages of spirals, whirls, knots, votive wheels and repetitive linear shapes to represent the cycles of nature, life, death, and rebirth.

Three was also an important symbol, representing the three forms of the god/dess. The triskelion (three legged man), triquetra (three cornered shapes), arwen (three parallel rays), and triple spirals so loved by modern tattooists would have been a familiar images to Iron Age Celts.

KNOTTY PROBLEMS

We all know that tattoos were big in the ancient world. High status Egyptian ladies, Scythians and Thracians wore them. The bodies of bog men and ice men have survived the ravages of time complete with their inky talismans.

The Celts, too, seemed to love a little bit of ink. Celtic



The Battersea Shield
Bronze, glass

Found in the River Thames at Battersea Bridge, London, England, 350-50 BC
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Horned helmet
Bronze

From the River Thames at Waterloo Bridge, London, England, 200-50 BC
© The Trustees of the British Museum

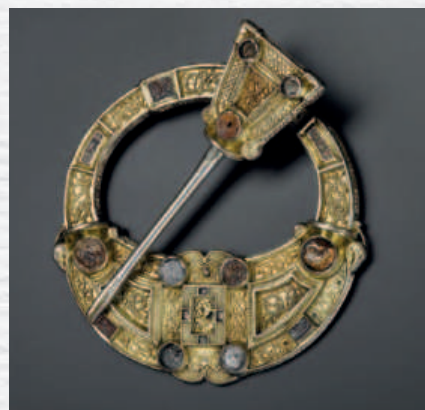




Balmaclellan mirror
Bronze
Balmaclellan, south-west Scotland,
AD 80–250
© National Museums Scotland



Hunterston brooch
Silver, gold and amber
Hunterston, south-west
Scotland, AD 700–800
© National Museums Scotland



Iron Age pony cap
Bronze
Torrs, south-west Scotland,
300–100 BC
© National Museums Scotland



Painted pots from Clermont-Ferrand
Ceramic
Clermont-Ferrand, central France, 150–100 BC
© Bibracte / Antoine Maillier

Herod of Antioch, wrote: “the Britons incise on their bodies coloured pictures of animals, of which they are very proud”

figurines and coins frequently depict images with tattoo-like marks on their torsos and face. But what sort of images did they wear?

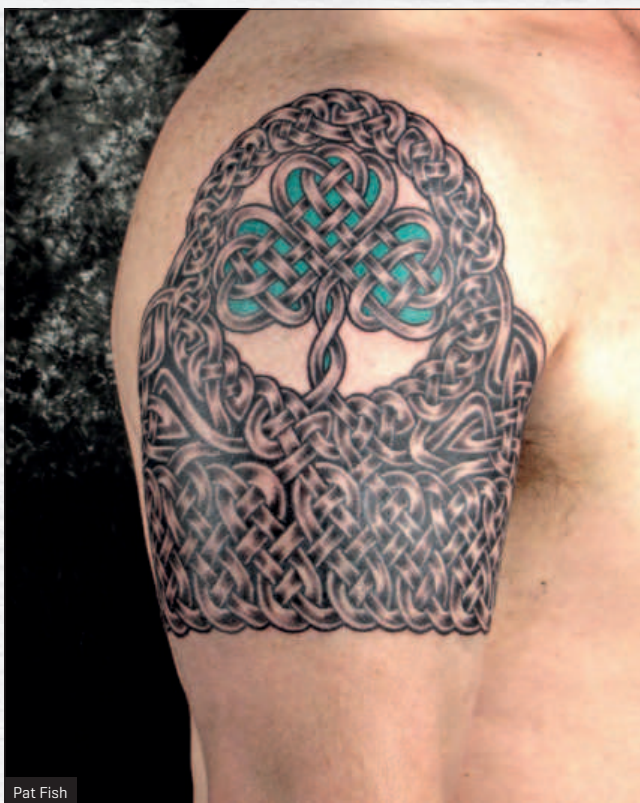
In the Third Century AD, Herod of Antioch, wrote: “the Britons incise on their bodies coloured pictures of animals, of which they are very proud”. Three hundred years later, Isidore of Seville commented that the Picts derived their names from the “absurd marks” made “by being pricked with iron needles”.

We don’t know much more than that, but today’s Celtic tattoo artists build on sound foundations.

Pat Fish, labelled “Queen of the Knots” by Lyle Tuttle, has spent her 30-year professional life in the pursuit, study and practice of Celtic art. “My heritage is Scottish and ... I like to think that I have the atavistic race memory of my illustrated ancestors, and am bringing their art back alive in the skin of their contemporary descendants.”

For Pat, Celtic illuminated manuscripts are a major source of inspiration. “I enjoy,” she says, “the mixture of abstract and representational patterning. The complexity of the weaving lines demands a high degree of attention to detail, and can flow across the musculature of the body in an organic way that suits tattooing well. Those illuminated pages are filled with tiny details ... and when they’re enlarged they make very powerful tattoos.”

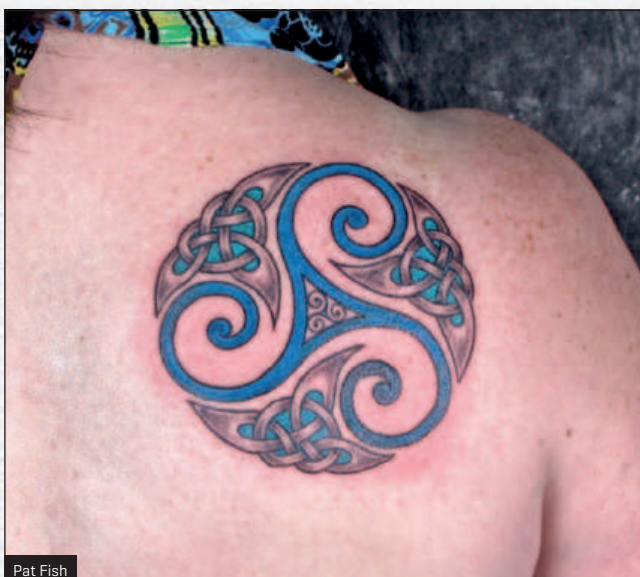
Celtic crosses, “specifically the carved stone high crosses in graveyards and market squares” are pervasive images too but the real pleasure and the challenge for Pat is in “the patterns themselves, the knot work panels on the crosses and in the manuscripts ... to work with them to make tattoos that can mimic chain mail on the body.”



Pat Fish



Pat Fish



Pat Fish



Pat Fish

The complexity of the weaving lines demands a high degree of attention to detail, and can flow across the musculature of the body in an organic way that suits tattooing well

Pat Fish

KEEPING IT REAL

Tattooist Colin Dale has made extensive studies of 'lost' and native tattooing techniques, including some experimental archaeology. "Tattooing with rose and hawthorns, flint stone and the like... using natural pigments from soot, coal and ochre..."

Although it's commonly thought that the Celts used woad for body decoration, this is based on a mistranslation of a passage from Julius Caesar's accounts of his conquest of Britain. What he actually said was that the local tribes wore body decoration the colour of blue-green

vitrum glass. Woad is not only useless as a tattoo ink but highly toxic. Seriously—don't try it at home.

"Woad," Colin muses, "would have been used as a war paint or maybe more elaborately as henna is used today. However more detailed designs would have to be tattooed, probably with coal based pigments which would also have a bluish tinge after healing. There was no word for tattooing in those days so you just have to pay attention to the descriptions of the process rather than the description of the results. Unfortunately there are many DIY types these days who would rather 'Do' than 'Learn'



Colin Dale



Colin Dale

Gundestrup Cauldron
Silver
Gundestrup, northern Denmark, 100 BC-AD 1
© The National Museum of Denmark



I think that in the modern world, people of Northern Europe as well the ancestors of immigrants to North America are feeling a loss of cultural identity

Colin Dale

which has led to some unfortunate accidents."

The truth is, you can only take 'authenticity so far. We'll never know for sure what images the Celts wore and how they applied them. If Colin and Pat were to be truly authentic they'd be pissing in the ink.

At the end of the day, tattooing is all about making connections. Colin: "I think that in the modern world, people of Northern Europe as well the ancestors of immigrants to North America are feeling a loss of cultural identity. In an attempt to fill this void, people of Nordic/Celtic heritage are returning to the cultural patterns of the past and using these as the inspiration for their tattoos."

Pat agrees. "The significance of the images may be lost

to us," she says, "but the haunting beauty of these ancient symbols continues to be quite compelling and the charm of wearing a design from centuries past adds a layer of meaning and connection to a tattoo. I feel a real pleasure knowing that through my tattooing I am giving people with Celtic and Pictish heritage a way to celebrate their connection to that style of art."

Thanks to Pat Fish and Colin Dale for taking the time to chat. To see more of Pat's fabulous work visit: www.luckyfish.com and www.luckyfishart.com where you can view, download and buy Pat's custom Celtic designs. Visit Colin's online gallery at <http://www.skinandbone.dk/colin-dale>

Celts: Art & Identity exhibition, British Museum

"Celts: Art and Identity", published by the the British Museum and the National Museums of Scotland, £25, paperback.

This Winter, the British Museum launches the first major exhibition of Celtic art and artefacts for 40 years. Running until 31st January [so be quick!], the exhibition covers 2,500 years of history and culture, from the first written mention of the Celts in 450 AD, to an exploration of what it means to be Celtic today. This is an exhibition that simply cries out to be seen and re-seen. Awash with spectacular imagery and art, the exhibition features include standout pieces like the Waterloo helmet and Battersea shield, along with early illuminated medieval manuscripts, and the spectacular Gundestrup cauldron. Together with more disparate items—a Liberty tea set and even a football shirt—the pieces in this exhibition help trace the Europe-wide connections that created a Celtic identity which endures to this day.

Alternatively, an exhibition catalogue, "Celts: Art and Identity" (ISBN 0714128368) makes an invaluable reference for the Celtic or the merely Celtic-curious.

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the brotherhood part two

In Part Two of 'The Brotherhood', Beccy Rimmer talks to two remarkable individuals about tattooing and why it's playing a part in the recovery of the recent Nepal earthquake...

Last issue, I spoke about the people we met in Nepal—Sozy, the tattoo shop manager, Randeep Rai, tattoo artist and Zen Joshi, apprentice. There was one artist we spent a lot of time with, Bimal Rai, who would give me a real insight into tattooing in Nepal.

I asked him if he thought Nepalese tattoo artists worked harder than those in other countries.

'Yes, we have to work a little bit harder. We don't have supplies all the time and we can't get equipment easily. We're kind of still old school, doing things in an old school way, but at the conventions we get to know new things about new technology and we start getting supplies.'

Whilst tattooing in Nepal it is not uncommon to lose power completely. I witnessed Bimal, 20 minutes into a tattoo, having to swap to his portable equipment.

I was interested to hear about how Bimal's attitudes towards tattooing have changed working in a particular environment. He says that the more he explores, the less he worries about perfectly fine lines and detail.

'It is all about composition and shape. Fit for form pieces that will stand out years after healing, not just at first glance.' Bimal sometimes meets a client in the morning and not tattoo until late afternoon. They spend the day together finding out who the person is and what they want... they develop a connection.

He was also always taught that 'being an artist, you should like doing different styles.' He says, 'I used to only liked oriental and realistic kind of things, one day Mohan dai called me and said, 'if you can only do what you like, everybody can do that. You should try to enjoy the things that you don't like.' As an artist you should be able to do



you can't just be a tattooist, anyone can buy a machine but it has to be in you

STATEMENT FROM LINC2NEPAL

www.lincs2nepal.org

'The situation in Nepal is at an all time low. Things are much more difficult than they were after the earthquakes. For those of you who are not aware, over 3 months ago, India's borders were closed to Nepal cutting off supplies of petrol, diesel, electricity, kerosene, LPG, veg oil, medicines, the list is endless. Hospitals are closing and travel is almost impossible. I had to fly out to our school as there is no fuel and the few buses attempting to travel to where our school is situated are being attacked and set alight. It is difficult to think that this is how we have to live in the 21st century, that humanity can treat its neighbours in this way. People here are very frightened both for the present and for the future.'

everything. Since then, tattooing has never been harder for me.'

While experimenting with new styles, new inspiration and attention to detail, Bimal's work was a real strive for perfection. He believes you can't just be a tattooist, anyone can buy a machine but it has to be in you.

Some days Bimal would work until the early hours of the morning tattooing. 'It's not about finishing, and my clients are OK with that. The client relationship is very important.'

'When I do a tattoo, you should feel it here...' he says and touches his heart. 'I am giving up my everything to a person who will then keep it safe and carry it for the rest of his life. That is the important thing. Tattoos are not for commercial gain. It's not about

the money.'

I wanted to ask him more about tattooing outdoor since the earthquake. 'After the earthquake, we wanted to tattoo, but it wasn't possible, and we were worried about when the next earthquake might come.'

'Then I thought, why don't we do it outside? A friend from France brought me a small power bank, so I went back to Dharan and we tried doing it outdoors, with a tent and everything. I did my first tattoo on my friend, in the outdoors, and it was really nice.'

This October, we were in Nepal for only two weeks, but we plan to return. We have a lot planned for the coming year, including a trip to India, personal projects, a possible second trip to Nepal and our wedding. We



tattoos are not for commercial gain. it's not about the money

also plan to work with Lincs2Nepal, a local charity set up by a good friend that builds schools in Nepal.

The art in Nepal all stems from real life culture, tattooing what they know and exploring what works best is second nature, with not much initial outside influence on original designs.

If the industry owes Nepal anything then it is a huge thank you for the art seeping in

through travelling artists and fans alike, inspiring them. We owe them for this and recognition should just be the start. The geometric patterns, mandalas and religious designs tattooed by many today stem from this DIY culture that is continually producing beautiful, innovative designs, working with more modern techniques and ideas as they go.

Something that has stuck with me during our visit, is Bimal talking about tattooing and saying, 'it is not just a tattoo, it's a TATTOO, you know?!'

I know exactly what he means. ▣

PLAY YOUR PART

One thing Nepalese tattoo artist Bimal has personally requested is artwork for his new studio from the UK, and has tasked Katy-Jane with gathering donations from UK tattoo artists. 'It would be lovely to have some gifts from artists showing their support next time we visit, get in touch via any of the links below if you would like to donate something.'

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THE FAR SIDE

Craigy Lee: No longer 'man about town', but 'man just about as far away from town as you could ever be'. Is life really so different on the other side of the world?

First up, let me wish you all a happy new year, I hope it's fulfilling and prosperous for you all. I've been off the radar for a little bit, but here I am back again!

I've noticed this month a lot of artists whining about people stealing their tattoo designs, or biting their "style". I have covered this before—it is a can of worms! The internet is a double-edged sword. Social media is great for sharing tattoos and reaching potential customers, but people can re-share your picture countless times and unless your photo is watermarked, the original artists credit gets lost in the abyss of the deep web. If you're using the internet to promote yourself and your tattoo work by sharing it on websites and social media, you have to come to terms with the fact that somewhere along the line, someone could copy that tattoo and there's nothing to stop it being done. It's happened to me a few times and yes, it's a bit crap, but the bonuses far outweigh this.

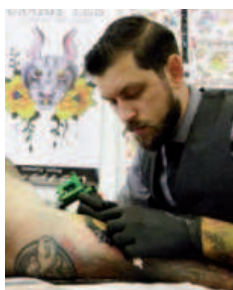
As for biting "styles", that's a totally different kettle of fish. There are so many flash books and sketchbooks out there, it's really hard to come up with a genuinely original design—so all you traditional tattoo artists bitching about some up and coming artist stealing your style, you need to get over yourself, it's all been done before! The same goes for most styles in fact.

You may draw your cherry blossoms or Japanese waves a little different, but ultimately we're all sharing the same pool of source material. Portrait and realism artists that tattoo a Marilyn Monroe or an Audrey Hepburn all have the same reference photos to choose from. As tattooing grows as an art form (and the more artists there are), the less originality there will be. Even if you think you have come up with something a bit different, you could be browsing the internet one day and see a design almost exactly the same only to find out the date stamp on the photo or pre-dates your own.

It does happen. It's like that old saying



**THE INTERNET IS AN INVALUABLE TOOL
BUT THE DAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE JUST
WALK INTO A TATTOO SHOP OFF THE
STREET IS COMING TO AN END**



CRAIGY LEE
electric_gent

goes: "great minds think alike".

We all just need to lighten up a little bit. I'm not for one minute saying printing a tattoo off the internet, tracing it and tattooing it on someone else is OK, but if you're that uptight about it, take all your tattoos off the internet. Simple.

For all of us, the internet is an invaluable tool for sharing our work and gaining new customers. The days in which people just walk into a tattoo shop off the street is coming to an end—most people really do find their tattoo artist via internet.

Got a topic or issue you would like me to discuss? Well drop me a line: craigylee@skindeep.co.uk or find me on instagram @craigy_lee

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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

THE PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF DEATH IN THE MIND OF SOMEONE LIVING

Yesterday, my hair got stuck in the vacuum cleaner. I was kneeling on the floor, extendable hose in hand, peering under the bed, when a big chunk of my hair got sucked into the cyclonic motor.

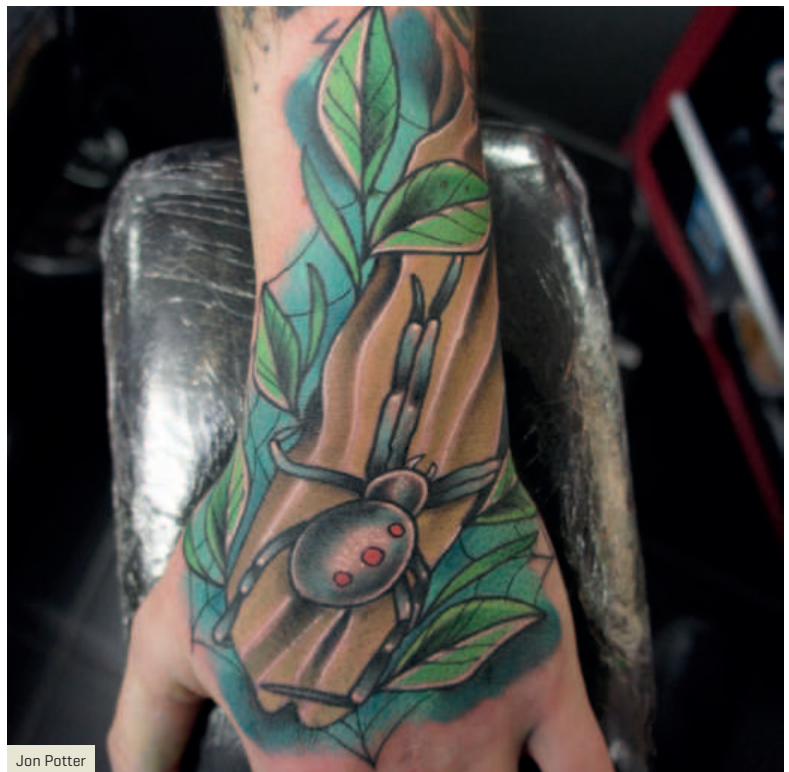
I managed to turn it off, despite not being able to turn my head to see the switch, and fortunately my phone was just about within reach. I called my teenaged son, and while I waited for him to tram it home from his girlfriend's house I managed to post a ridiculous selfie on Facebook, complete with avant garde-Hoover hat.

Luckily the incredulous comments provided distraction from my physical discomfort and respite from the legendary-deaths-involving-ordinary-household-objects stories coursing through my firmly stuck head. I was crouched over the Hoover, phone in hand for so long, I even attempted to use the enforced freetime to catch up on a few emails but it turns out, it's difficult to concentrate in that position. When my son finally arrived to complete his mercy mission, it became apparent that he couldn't actually get in the house, and I had no option but to half crawl, half shuffle down the stairs and open the front door, steadfastly accompanied by my electronic Siamese twin.

Despite insisting I should first 'stand up' so he could 'get a proper look', which would've been funny if only gravity wasn't so serious, I was eventually cut free with the kitchen scissors. My son went back out, now with some crime scene-esque photos to show to his mates, and I, mildly concussed and entirely exhausted, went to bed and slept for the next 14 hours.

I tell this story, in part because it's pretty funny, but also because it was actually quite terrifying, and while I escaped relatively unscathed I am nonetheless reminded how vulnerable we humans are, and how we are always just a misstep, a misjudgement, a hair's breath away from losing far more than a chunk of hair.

Fine Art has long been engaged in a love affair with mortality, from Hans Holbein's 16th century paintings to Damien Hirst's millennium formaldehyde shark (it's title borrowed



A TATTOOERS WORK CAN NEVER BE EXPERIENCED AS A WHOLE BODY, FOR IT HAS ALREADY WALKED AWAY

for this column) but tattoo art has a more meaningful relationship with mortality, one that is arguably even more complex.

The tattoo's association with death can be viewed as if a series of circles, a messy combination of concentric circles, like the rings in a felled tree, and separate, but overlapping circles, as in a Venn diagram. The largest circle, the one that surrounds all the others, is the lifespan of the tattoo, and how despite the practice itself being thousands of years old, each tattoo ends with the life of it's wearer. Just inside that circle is another, this one



representing the lack of legacy for tattoo artists. In other art forms, an artists output is described as a 'body of work', this work becomes more valuable, more meaningful, when it is collated and curated. A tattooers work can never be experienced as a whole body, for it has already walked away, part of another, more literal body.

Instead, each one lives on it's own terms, and unfinished works can roam free, out of the control of the maker. Of course, tattooists can and do generate art-objects, such as paintings and drawings, but these seemingly supplementary works, sometimes preliminary designs destined to become tattoos anyway, can feel just as transient as the tattoos themselves. Many of the prolific tattooers of yesteryear have left little more for future generations than a couple of flash sheets and a collection of machines. Tattooers are not the type of artists that become more successful after death.

Perhaps this is in part due to another circle, this time overlapping and representing the iconography of death that makes up part of the traditional tattoo canon. From the general and literal, the reapers and skulls, to the more subtle or personal, memorials and portraits, the visual language of death and loss finds a more poetic home on the skin than on a wall. This kind of intimacy is unsuited to the secondary market.

Another overlapping circle contains a further nod to mortality, to become tattooed we must endure pain, as for this art we part pay in blood. Still, the pain is bearable and the blood loss sufficiently minor that our survival of the process is more symbolic than heroic. Inside this, a smaller circle, one that uses symbolic survival to express true survival and reveals the power of tattoos to transform an unloved or damaged body, filling voids and hiding scars, celebrating surviving an illness, an operation, a warzone. As a hoarder denies loss by filling their home, we deny death by filling our bodies with the traces of life.

I'll probably still buy a new vacuum cleaner though, just in case. ▣

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This month Beccy Rimmer has been thinking about tattoo laser removal, through no fault of her own...

I was sitting in a coffee shop last week having a conversation with a close friend. I'm currently having my right sleeve reworked and refreshed and I was telling the details of what Dan Metcalfe was doing to bring some of it back to life.

We're not really covering over anything—some of the colours are going brighter and the background is going darker to remove some of the wave effects. I wouldn't call it a cover-up, and I wouldn't call it a regret.

The women on the stool next to us suddenly leant over: "I'm sorry to butt in on your conversation, but I just overheard you talking about your sleeve and the fact you're getting it covered up".

"Oh, yes... well not really covered up..."

"Well," she said, "I just wanted to say if you don't want to cover it up and would rather just remove it, I have a friend that does laser removal. I could give you her details if you like. She's amazing, she's mobile and comes to do it in the comfort of your own home, so you don't have to go to a studio or anything."

Many different thoughts whirled around my head. I replied, "no, I'm OK, I'm really not looking to get laser removal but thanks."

I'm sure you're second-guessing what I'm going to explore following this conversation—can you even get laser removal from home? Is that safe or legal? The thing I found really interesting was the fact that she said it at all! A stranger had boldly offered advice about how I could remove my tattoo, when that wasn't something I had wanted, discussed or considered.

Put a similar remark into other discussions surrounding your appearance. Laser removal is a very serious procedure—some would call it 'surgery' to sensitively get rid of something you no longer want on your body for personal reasons.

If you're discussing cheekbones, is it appropriate for a stranger to lean in to recommend good surgical or beauty procedures? If you're discussing your weight, would you take offence from someone interrupting to hand you the Weight Watchers website address?



SHOULD I TAKE OFFENCE FROM SOMEONE SUGGESTING THAT I SHOULD PERMANENTLY ALTER MY APPEARANCE BY UNDERTAKING A PRETTY SUBSTANTIAL MEDICAL METHOD?



BECCY RIMMER
BeccyRimmer

I wasn't so much offended by this remark—she was polite and I think wanted to talk more about her own tattoo experiences rather than actually offer me advice. However, it got me thinking—do we have the same level of intimacy and sensitivity when talking about tattoos, as we do with other body-altering undertakings?

With a multitude of tattoo cover-up TV shows, are the general public becoming savvy and vociferous about how they can get rid of unwanted tattoos? Have we forgotten how to appropriately discuss our bodies, and the bodies of others? Is that a good thing, or a bad thing?

As with all human-to-human interaction in tattooing, we can't go wrong as long as we offer each other advice respectfully. And more importantly, with an admittance that we've not all got the right answers.



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